
Policy on Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees and Asylum-seekers with a legal right to live and study in Hungary

(applicable to all US-registered masters' degree programs)

Central European University (CEU) has encountered applicants who have been granted refugee status by Hungary or other state or are being assessed for refugee status or are in refugee-like situations¹ (hereinafter: “**Applicants**”) whose existing qualifications require specific means of assessment and recognition. This policy is intended to establish procedures for assessing qualifications for entry to Masters degree programs at CEU by refugees and asylum seekers or individuals in refugee-like situations.

CEU will consider applications of refugees and asylum-seekers with legal status in Hungary and refugees with legal status in another state who are able to apply for a residence or study permit in Hungary. Additionally this policy applies to people in refugee-like situations, i.e. individuals who are stateless or denied protection in their countries of citizenship or habitual residence but not recognized as refugees in their country of residence. **CEU will only admit students with a legal right to live and study in Hungary.**

The procedures outlined here follow best practice recommendations by the European Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, hereinafter: “**Convention**”) and are already in place in a number of European states.² The Convention has been signed and ratified by Hungary with the Act XCIX of 2001 and it has entered into force on April 1, 2000 in respect of Hungary.

¹ The ‘term’ refugee refers to individuals recognized by national states following national and/or international legal procedures, and include individuals granted full or subsidiary protection. The term ‘asylum seeker’ refers to individuals who are being assessed for refugee protection. The term ‘refugee-like’ refers to individuals who are either stateless or denied adequate protection by the governments in their countries of citizenship or habitual residence and are not able to claim refugee status.

² The European Commission’s *European Area of Recognition Manual* (EAR Manual) Chapter 12 http://www.eurorecognition.eu/manual/ear_manual_v_1.0.pdf and [The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region](#), particularly Article VII.

The procedures are intended to address two situations:

1. A lack of documentary evidence of past Bachelors qualifications.
2. Incomplete educational qualifications, in particular when refugee students have been expelled from universities or granted 'lesser' qualifications such as an 'Associate Degree' despite finishing most coursework required for the degree, or have had to interrupt their studies for reasons related to their flight.

I. General rules and basic principles of the assessment procedures

1. The procedures listed here are derived from the European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions, published in 2014 (http://ww.eurorecognition.eu/manual/ear_manual_v_1.0.pdf; hereinafter: “**Manual**”). The Manual gives general practical guidance on the recognition of academic qualifications and on the obligations on institutions in countries which have signed and ratified the Convention.³
2. In line with the Convention CEU acknowledges that the right to education is a human right, and that higher education, which is instrumental in the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, constitutes an exceptionally rich cultural and scientific asset for both individuals and society.
3. Taking the above into consideration the aim of CEU is to set up a fair and transparent recognition procedure and policy regarding the assessment of qualifications.

II. Recognition of Bachelors Qualification Holders Without Documentation

The Convention covers the recognition of qualifications from people who, for reasons beyond their control, are unable to provide full documentary evidence of academic experience and qualifications. This includes refugees, stateless persons and asylum-seekers.

According to Article VII of the Convention, refugees, displaced persons or persons in a refugee-like situation who have formal education from a recognized and/or accredited educational institution and others, who for valid reasons cannot document the qualifications they claim, have a right to assessment of their qualifications when applying for admission to a study program.

Problems arise when certificates and transcripts have been lost or are not available because of conditions of or reasons for flight. Further, it may be difficult to verify documentation or inquire about the education system, because of the political situation in the country of origin.

The European Handbook on Recognition encourages the preparation of a “background paper” giving an overview of qualifications or periods of study claimed. This background paper should be the basis for assessing qualifications with all available documents and supporting evidence present. The

³ The text of this introduction is adapted from a document summarizing EAR Manual procedures published by the European Network of Information Centers, an agency of the European Commission fostering cohesion in education policy in Europe. http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/5335_EAR-HEI-Recognition-of-qualification-holders-without-documentation.pdf

background paper is also the basis for an assessment procedure examining the learning outcomes which could be reasonably expected from the undocumented qualification. This assessment procedure may involve specially arranged examination and interviews with University academic staff.

Procedure

Refugee applicants to CEU Masters programs without documented evidence of educational qualifications may apply in the normal way. When asked, in the application process, to present proof of previous educational experience such as a degree or diploma, the Applicant may upload a brief statement stating: (a) the name of the degree earned and its grade (if applicable), (2) the university or institute of higher education studied at, (3) title of thesis if applicable, (4) and key subjects studied.

CEU Academic Units should assess the application following its normal procedures. If the Academic Unit considers that the Applicant merits an offer of a place, steps should be undertaken to ascertain the qualifications gained and the level of knowledge attained:

1. An Assessment Committee should be formed comprising the Director of the Masters Program applied to, a second faculty member, and the CEU Provost, or Provost's appointee.
2. The Applicant is asked to complete a "background paper" using the form in Appendix. The background paper shall be completed in English.
3. When completing the background paper, the responsibility for providing adequate information rests with the Applicant, who shall provide such information in good faith.
4. The Assessment Committee examines information in the background paper. The first step is to assess the extent of documentary evidence of qualifications available. The Committee should take into account diverse documents put forward, including testimonials by former professors, teachers or university staff, transcripts (including incomplete ones) and any other documented proof of registering, attending and/or graduating from university or an institute of higher education. Lack of these documentation should not be held against the Applicant at any stage of the assessment.
5. If necessary the Assessment Committee may organize an examination/test, to allow the demonstration of acquired knowledge, competencies and skills, or perform an interview with a committee of experts who can ask specific questions to the Applicant, used to gather additional contextual information.
6. If the Applicant is a student at one of Central European University's refugee preparatory programs run by CEU Open Learning Initiative (CEU OLIVE) the Committee should take into account and assess that curriculum as well (see section III. 'Incomplete or Lesser Educational Qualifications')
7. Where documentary evidence is lacking or inadequate, the Assessment Committee should put in place means of testing the learning outcomes that could reasonably be expected to have been gained from the educational qualifications claimed. This may involve an appropriate form of exam or an interview with academic staff or both.
8. Once the assessment procedure is complete the Assessment Committee may recommend: (a) that the Applicant be accepted on the basis of the Committee's investigation of past educational qualifications and/or the Applicant's knowledge, (b) that the Applicant undertake

a university preparatory program, such as those run by CEU Open Learning Initiative, because the assessment of the Applicant's level of knowledge and learning points to the need for some further preparation, or (c) that the Applicant not be offered a place at the Masters program based on assessment of past educational qualifications and level of knowledge.

9. Based on the recommendation of the Assessment Committee as a result of the assessment procedure CEU shall – within a reasonable time limit – issue an official, formal document which outlines the recognition decision, based on the evaluation purpose; and validity period thereof.
10. In situations where the outcome is not favorable for the Applicant, CEU should offer:
 - a. information on the possibility to appeal the evaluation outcome;
 - b. alternative pathways to recognition.
11. The responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not fulfil the relevant requirements lies with the Assessment Committee.

III. Refugee Applicants with Incomplete or Lesser Educational Qualifications

Sometimes, for reasons related to their flight, refugees who had already completed a significant part of their degree were not able to fully complete their studies. In some cases, refugees have been expelled from university for the reasons that led them to flee (political activities, discrimination on ethnic, religious or gender basis, and so on) or otherwise been unable to complete a degree. Sometimes, refugee students have been granted a 'lesser' degree, for example an 'Associate Bachelors', even when they have completed their studies.

In these cases, Academic Units are encouraged to make recourse to a 'Foundation Year' for refugee students who have completed almost all course requirements for Bachelors degrees. Completion of this Foundation Year - the equivalent of a university preparatory program run by CEU Open Learning Initiative - would allow students to be assessed on merit for entry to a Masters program with certain conditions.

CEU may encounter Applicants with incomplete or lesser educational qualifications either once they apply for an Masters program or when they apply to CEU's existing university preparatory programs for refugees (those run at CEU Open Learning Initiative).

When encountered in the normal application process to a Masters program, the steps listed in section II. above should be followed. Academic Units may at this time recommend that a student enrol in a CEU Open Learning Initiative program.

Potential Applicants with incomplete or lesser educational qualifications are also likely to apply directly to one of CEU's refugee preparatory courses. Academic Units are encouraged to consider these preparatory courses as adequate for completing the knowledge requirements to be assessed as a Masters program candidate, though there is no obligation on the part of the Academic Unit to accept the student.

Procedure

1. The Applicant with inadequate or incomplete educational qualifications is asked to fill out the background paper (Appendix). If the Applicant has had to fill out a background paper previously when applying directly to a Masters program, that same paper may be used.
2. The level of knowledge of the Applicant and their qualifications (documented or not) is assessed by the Masters Program Director who should identify key knowledge areas lacking. The Masters Program Director should consider if this lack can be made up for in a 10 month university preparatory program.
3. Where such missing knowledge can be reasonably expected to be made up for in a preparatory program, the Masters Program Director consults with Directors of CEU OLIVE to construct a 10-month long syllabus designed to compensate for missing knowledge areas and allow the student to reach a level where they may be assessed for Masters entry.
4. The Masters Program Director should be involved in supervising the course of study at the preparatory program in consultation with CEU OLIVE Directors.
5. The student may apply to the Masters program while still enrolled in the CEU OLIVE preparatory program and the Masters Program may make a conditional offer, stipulating successful completion, including examination, of the CEU OLIVE syllabus.
6. The Masters Program is under no obligation to accept an Applicant who has completed the CEU OLIVE preparatory program, and may assess the Applicant with recourse to further examinations as it sees fit.

Signed by *CEU President and Rector Michael Ignatieff*.

The original document is filed at the Office of the Academic Secretary.

APPENDIX

FORM FOR PREPARATION OF BACKGROUND REPORT

This is a form adapted from one in use by the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

This form is for you to give relevant information on your previous educational experience and qualifications. Its purpose is to allow Central European University to assess if you are qualified for entry to one of its Masters programs.

Personal Details

CITIZENSHIP:

GENDER:

FIRST AND MIDDLE NAME:

FAMILY NAME:

PREVIOUS NAME, IF CHANGED (ENCLOSE DOCUMENTATION if available, E.G. MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE):

POSTAL ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL:

Contact person

Is there a person (e.g. a person helping you fill in the form) that we may contact if we need further clarification of your information?

NAME OF CONTACT PERSON:

NAME OF INSTITUTION/AUTHORITY/COMPANY (if applicable):

POSTAL ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE :

E-MAIL:

Documentation

If you have any documentation at all, please enclose it with the application. This may include a statement by your educational institution confirming that you have been enrolled in a program, a testimonial from a former professor, a diploma of some sort or it may be a complete or incomplete transcript of subjects you have studied. If you have any of these or any other document showing that you have enrolled in, attended or graduated from university please include it here.

List of documentation included:

If you are filling out this form, you are likely not to have a copy of your Diploma or Degree. Central European University understands that access to such documentation may be impossible. To the extent that you are comfortable, please indicate why you have been unable to provide a copy of your degree or diploma:

Education

NAME OF QUALIFICATION/PROGRAM OF EDUCATION:

NAME OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:

TOWN:

COUNTRY:

PERIOD OF EDUCATION: START (YEAR): ____ – END (YEAR): ____

DID YOU COMPLETE ALL OF THE PROGRAM? YES NO

WHAT WERE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROGRAM?

E.g. certificate, admissions exam.

WHAT WAS THE OFFICIAL LENGTH OF THE PROGRAM?

How many years, weeks or semesters?

What was the official language of the Program?

Subject field and content of the program

PLEASE DESCRIBE THE SUBJECT FIELD(S) OF THE PROGRAM

PLEASE DESCRIBE THE MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

DID YOU SUBMIT A MAJOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT/PROJECT (such as a thesis)? YES

NO If yes:

WAS IT A FINAL ASSIGNMENT/PROJECT? YES NO

HOW MANY PAGES WAS IT? _____

OFFICIAL DURATION OF YOUR WORK ON THE ASSIGNMENT/PROJECT: ___ WEEKS

PLEASE GIVE A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT/PROJECT:

Purpose of the program

DID COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM GIVE ACCESS TO FURTHER EDUCATION (is this program considered adequate preparation for Masters study)?

WAS THE PROGRAM AIMED AT EMPLOYMENT IN A PARTICULAR LINE OF WORK?
IF YES: WHICH OCCUPATION/PROFESSION?

Work experience

HAVE YOU WORKED IN YOUR FIELD AFTER THE END OF YOUR STUDIES/TRAINING?

IF YOU HAVE RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE: PLEASE INDICATE YOUR EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE HERE:

EMPLOYMENT PERIOD:

JOB FUNCTIONS:

EMPLOYMENT PERIOD:

JOB FUNCTIONS:

EMPLOYMENT PERIOD:

JOB FUNCTIONS:

EMPLOYMENT PERIOD:

JOB FUNCTIONS:

EMPLOYMENT PERIOD:

JOB FUNCTIONS:

EMPLOYMENT PERIOD:

JOB FUNCTIONS:

IS CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ALLOWED TO MAKE INQUIRIES IN YOUR COUNTRY OF EDUCATION IN ORDER TO VERIFY YOUR INFORMATION? PLEASE STATE ANY CONDITIONS TO YOUR ANSWER (FOR EXAMPLE YOU MAY ASK US NOT TO CONTACT A PARTICULAR INSTITUTION OR PERSON)

DATE:

SIGNATURE:

Document information	
Type	Policy
Number	P-1705
Title	Policy on Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees and Asylum-seekers with a legal right to live and study in Hungary
Distribution	Internal
Filename	P-1705 Policy on Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees and Asylum-seekers with a legal right to live and study in Hungary
Notes	
Related documents	
For final documents	
Approved by:	Senate
Date of approval	May 26, 2017
Enters force	May 29, 2017
Lead Unit	Admissions (Enrollment Management)