

Policy name: **Support for Refugees**

Date Presented: **09/02/17**

Lapse Date: **May 2024**

STUDENT COUNCIL NOTES:

The student executive should be given the students' mandate to campaign and advocate for those who are displaced by conflict and natural disaster worldwide.

This amendment is in recognition of the original Refugee Support Policy (02/11/2017). The context of this policy is slightly outdated with regard to the context given within it. The Council acknowledges continuing work by UUSU to ensure that students seeking refuge in NI receive appropriate funding by way of scholarships and recently secured additional bursaries of £7,500 (£2,500 per student) for 3 students seeking refuge. The Council also acknowledges that UUSU may seek to continue work to support refugee groups within the wider community and wishes to thank them for their support so far. This has included support for charitable acts by individual students and Councillors in their personal capacity.

A refugee is defined as under the 1951 UN Charter on Refugees as someone "who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."

STUDENT COUNCIL BELIEVES:

Those who have fled their homes due to conflict, natural disaster or threat to life may resettle in peaceful countries, bringing with them highly complex circumstances and challenges that cannot be addressed through financial means alone.

Ongoing conflict in Afghanistan has interrupted the lives of those who are now arriving, however the UK Parliament is only granting a very small number of these refuge. This is despite criticism from across Westminster, particularly from those of refugee origin and those who have served in 21st century Operations.

Approximately 850 refugees are to be granted permission to live in NI. Although there has been an emphasis on supporting those who have previously worked for NATO and United Nations countries, there are many more who bring much needed skills to the NI labour market. These include doctors, veterinarians, dentists, legal professionals, and others from across a wide range of professional fields.

STUDENT COUNCIL BELIEVES CONTINUED:

Ulster University is known as a civic institution and UUSU's history of campaigning on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters is exemplary. The original policy is accurate in its call to end global conflict. However, this now needs to be extended to consider more specific factors that may be achievable by UUSU.

STUDENT COUNCIL RESOLVES:

While the call for the end to all armed conflicts is admirable and must continue to be campaigned for, UUSU must also:

Campaign to all those responsible for the care of refugees at Ulster University for further funding to assist with academic and living costs. This includes extending existing grant schemes beyond 3 individual awards.

Continue campaigning for the rights of refugee families, paying particular attention to the rights of those who may face additional barriers to education (including women, disabled students, and those with caring responsibilities).

Ensure that those who began university-level courses that were interrupted by seeking refuge are able to resume their studies at Ulster University at the earliest possible convenience.

Ensure that appropriate and timely support is widely available for refugee students, international students whose home-countries are experiencing similar difficulties, and for those who have served in support roles in countries affected.

Name of Proposer: *Colette Ansell*

Name of Seconder: *Amy Merron*

Policy renewed on 26th April 2023

