IGC Donegal Branch Questions for IPA and Ukrainian Queries

General Feedback:

The government really need to have a department created for these people to contact and get answers in relation to specific questions. We have been given zero resources to help them and feel like we are guessing half the time as every institution seems different.

Our website has a lot of the information you need on it, please spend some time going through each section. There will always be tricky cases/exceptions but the general info remains the same more or less year to year. It is particularly important that you familiarise yourself with the Sanctuary Scholarships – who provides what, application closing dates, eligibility criteria etc.

Definitions:

IPA (international protection applicant): someone who has come to Ireland to seek international protection, someone whose application for protection (refugee status/subsidiary protection/Leave to remain) has not yet been decided; evidenced by the Blue Card/Temporary Residence Card.

Stamp 4 refugee status/subsidiary protection/permission to remain: someone who came to Ireland to seek international protection and to whom a protection status has been granted; someone who came here under Family Reunification; someone who came here under a resettlement programme (eg from Syria/Lebanon); evidenced by a Stamp 4 IRP (Irish Residence Permit) card.

IPAs:

1. Are IPAs students who have only been resident in Ireland/EU for 18 months, eligible to apply for SUSI?

   Answer: No, they are not eligible to apply for SUSI. Only students who have Stamp 4 and have been resident in Ireland for 3 years are eligible (if they have been residing in another EU country and have a stamp 4, they are not eligible, they have to be residing in Ireland for 3 years). They must have a Stamp 4 + 3 years residency before the start date of their course in order to be eligible for SUSI.

   State Funding

2. What about IPAs who are unaccompanied minors who are in state care who do not meet the residency criteria, what funding is available for them?

Answer: the same rules apply to all people seeking international protection, regardless of whether or not they entered the country as a minor: you need a Stamp 4 and 3 years residency to apply for a SUSI grant, get EU fees, and benefit from the Free Fees Initiative.

For some unaccompanied/aged out minors, this may also be relevant: Tusla Education Bursary

Also, these students can apply for Sanctuary Scholarships providing they meet the other criteria.

3. How come a labour market permission letter and stamp 4 is required for IPAs accessing Further Education QQI Levels 4 and above in some ETBs and not all ETBs? There does not appear to be consistency in relation to this.

   Answer: The only document required for a person seeking international protection to access Further Education is a Labour Market Access Permission. No ETB should be asking for an LMAP + a Stamp 4. That is simply incorrect. A Stamp 4 is not required to access Further Education.
   IRC Website FET

4. How much does an IPA student have to pay if they wish to proceed onto college (level 7/8 course) and have not been resident in the country for 3 out of 5 years?

   Answers: They will have to pay international/Non-EU fees, which is usually in the region of 10-14k per year depending on the HEI/course. If you are advising a student who has been classified as Non-EU, it is very important that you tell the student to defer/withdraw before October 31st as after this date, they will become liable for 50% of the fees no matter what.

5. Where/ what courses can an IPA student progress into if they have not been resident in the country 3 out of 5 years and how much do they have to pay?

   Answers: This question does not specify 'progress from what level' so we are assuming the student has completed a Level 5, in which case they can either

   - Progress to a Level 6
   - Do a University Access Course (L6)
   - Apply for L7/8

   How much it costs depends on the course/institution. For example, TU Dublin Access Foundation course has no fees but Trinty Access Programme does. UCD Access has fees but they also provide scholarships. IPAs who have been here for

less then 3 years can only do a L7/8 if they also get a Sanctuary Scholarship because without it, they would not be able to afford the fees which would be Non-EU.

Many students seeking protection may have already completed an undergraduate degree and may want to do an MA. Some universities offer Sanctuary Scholarships for Level 9 courses but not all.

6. Can IPA students work if under 18yrs and not resident in the country 3 out of 5 years?

   Answers: They must have work permit/labour market access permission. However, they must work the legal hours those under 18 must work under according to government regulations. Furthermore, their legal guardian must sign the permission on their behalf/submit the permission.

7. If an IPA student is resident in the country 3 out of 5 years do they have the exact same entitlements to HEAR/ DARE/SUSI/Scholarships as ROI students?

   Answer: They do not. They have to have a stamp 4 and be resident for 3 years in order to be eligible. They are only eligible for Sanctury Scholarships or charity funding (please see answer for question 1 for further details).

8. Will IPA students have to pay international fees or 2000 per year if they are here for 3 years? Are they entitled to full SUSI?

   Answer: students who have been in Ireland for 3 years but who are still in the protection process (ie they do not yet have a Stamp 4) will usually be classified as Non-EU. Some universities will classify as EU but it is not a given – we used to think it was but recent experiences have challenged this. However, there is some funding available for these students. It is called IPSS (International Protection Students Scheme) - IPSS This is administered by SUSI. It functions like SUSI but it is for students who are still seeking protection (ie not stamp 4) and have 3 years residency. This funding only pays the EU rate of fees and in our experience, IPA students who get this funding will (usually) be classified as EU fees.

9. Do IPA students have to produce a proficiency in English certificate in order to proceed onto 3rd Level? Where do they get this certificate from?

   Answer: This is up to the admissions requirement of each course. It is best to look at those requirements and see if they specify needing an English certificate

if the student does not originate from an English-speaking country (they will also specify which countries fall under this category). These requirements will also list what type of certificate is needed. In Ireland, an IELTs certificate is the most common but some courses will also accept DuoLingo. Some courses/HEIs may be able to waive the IELTS fees and/or can request a fee waiver from DuoLingo for refugee students. The advice you give an IPA student regarding English language proficiency would be exactly the same as the advice you would give any non-native English speaker who wanted to attend university.

10. Do IPA students have to have a European language (Spanish / French) to meet the 3rd language requirement? (Already exempt from Irish)?

    Answer: It is best to ask the college itself, however in most instances any 3rd language is fine. Again, the advice you give an IPA student regarding English language proficiency would be exactly the same as the advice you would give any non-native English speaker who wanted to attend university.

11. Can IPA students progress into college in the **North of Ireland** at any level e.g. courses equivalent to our PLC courses (level 5 and 6) as well as degree levels 7 and 8?

    Answer: People seeking protection are not allowed to leave the country, this includes N. Ireland. Once they have their Stamp 4 and a passport/travel document, they can leave.

12. Following on from question 9, if IPA students are allowed progress to Further & Higher Education in **Northern Ireland,** what fees will they pay?

    Answers: An IPA student is not allowed to study in N. Ireland.
    Once they get their Stamp 4, they can study abroad - they will pay home fees (as long as they meet ROI residency requirements of 3 years).

13. Are they entitled to apply for a Tuition Fee Loan?

    Answer: If they have been classified for EU fees, yes.

14. If they are subject to higher fees/International Fees, can they apply for a Tuition Fee loan for the higher amount?

    Answer: No, they cannot. The Tuition Fee is only applicable for those given EU fees.

Ukrainian:

1. In relation to the 3rd language requirement for NUI colleges, if a Ukrainian student is not presenting Gaeilge, is there a way that they can still meet the minimum entry requirements for courses that specify that Irish is needed?

   Answer: For this, it is best to discuss this with the higher education institution that they are applying to. Once again, it is up to the college itself. Again, the advice you would give a Ukrainian student in this situation would be the same advice you would give any student who does not have Leaving Cert Irish – there are no exceptions to this rule for refugees that we know of but it is best to speak to the HEI/course coordinator.

2. In relation to fees and funding, what are the fees for Ukrainian students for undergraduate degrees and can they qualify for a SUSI or equivalent grant?

   Answer: please see our website - Ukrainian Students in Ireland as there is funding available for Ukrainian students that is not available for other refugee students. The details are on the website. This is year to year funding – we cannot predict what will happen in 2025.

3. Do Ukrainian students receive the same entitlements as ROI students in regards to HEAR/DARE/SUSI/Scholarships?

   Answer: see above.

4. Do Ukrainian students have to complete the HPAT in order to proceed into medicine? If not, why not?

   Answer: We would assume so but best to check with the Medical Board.

5. Do Ukrainian students have to produce a proficiency in English certificate in order to proceed onto 3rd Level? Where do they get this certificate from?

   Answer: Please check answer 9 in the IPA section.

6. Can Ukrainian students progress into college in the **North of Ireland** at any level e.g. courses equivalent to our PLC courses (level 5 and 6) as well as degree levels 7 and 8?

   Answer: Please check answer 11 in the IPA section.

7. Following on from question 6, if students are allowed progress to Further & Higher Education in **Northern Ireland,** what fees will they pay?

   Answer: Please check answer 12 in the IPA section.

8. Are they entitled to apply for a Tuition Fee Loan?

   Answer: as above.

9. If they are subject to higher fees/International Fees, can they apply for a Tuition Fee loan for the higher amount?

   Answer: Please check answer 14 in the IPA section.