



Rt. Hon. Michelle Donelan MP

Minister of State for Higher and Further Education

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

15th March 2022

Dear Colleagues,

In recent weeks I have been extremely heartened by the solidarity the sector has shown in its response, supporting current staff and students impacted by Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine. I am writing to you to outline the action that the Government has taken, and further steps we will take, to support British nationals unable to continue their studies, Ukrainians in the UK, Ukraine and elsewhere - including launching the Ukraine Family Scheme and the [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#).

I know the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be welcomed by many of you as a way for you to support Ukrainians who wish to study in the UK. Phase One of the scheme will allow named sponsors in the UK to nominate a named Ukrainian or a named Ukrainian family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property.

In the future, organisations will be able to directly sponsor individuals, and we will be announcing details of that shortly. Universities can in the first instance [record their interest](#) for this scheme. Please begin to consider how you can contribute to this effort and support Ukrainians who will have had their hopes and ambitions disrupted by the terrible actions of Russia. I am confident that by working together as a sector, we have the opportunity to offer Ukrainians a brighter, stronger future, so that they are able to return to their home country with the hope of rebuilding. In order to respond effectively to this situation, I will be holding frequent meetings with the HE Taskforce and look forward to working with you to meet the ambitions of this scheme, including to set out as soon as possible how Ukrainians sponsored under this scheme will be able to access UK Higher Education.

There are also other safe and legal routes available for Ukrainians who wish to travel to the UK. The [Ukraine Family Scheme](#) allows immediate and extended family members of British nationals and people settled in the UK to come to the country. All of these measures will continue to keep pace with the developing situation on the ground and further details on the Home Office's changes to the immigration system can be found online [here](#), which is updated regularly to respond to the developing situation.

Separately, I am aware that UK nationals studying in Ukraine, many of whom were studying medicine, will also have had their studies disrupted. Government will look to support these students as they reassess their options in the UK and I would be grateful if colleagues can do similarly and treat these students sensitively should they approach you.

While I recognise that, for a variety of reasons, many of these students cannot be accommodated on medicine courses, I would encourage you to consider alternative options to allow these students to continue their studies, including on related courses in the biological sciences or subjects allied to medicine.

This government is also supporting Ukrainian students in the UK. New visa concessions announced by the Home Office provide students with an opportunity to extend their leave, or switch to the Graduate Route without having to leave the UK.

In addition, I recognise the current uncertainty will mean that many students may experience additional challenges. I would like to take this opportunity to thank institutions for the great work they have already done in supporting Ukrainian students, from providing crisis counsellors, to making Student Hardship Funds available for Ukrainian students who need financial assistance.

Protecting student wellbeing is vital and it is important that students can continue to access the mental health and wellbeing support they need. I ask that you continue to make this support available to them over the coming weeks and months.

As shown throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the great work of our Higher Education sector has enabled those facing incredibly difficult circumstances to continue their studies and feel truly supported in times of need. I have full confidence that you will support assist in our endeavours and will continue to support your current and future cohorts of staff and students.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle Donelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Rt. Hon. Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Higher and Further Education