

Advice for doctors and medical students arriving in the U.K. under the “Homes for Ukraine” Visa scheme.

The Homes for Ukraine visa scheme will allow you to live and work in the U.K. for up to 3 years. For the first 6 months you will receive free accommodation from your sponsor.

The eligibility criteria for the scheme are:

- Ukraine national or direct family member of a Ukraine national
- Living in Ukraine on or immediately before 1.1.2022
- Currently outside the U.K.

If you are a doctor or a medical student and have applied for a visa under this scheme this guide is for you.

This guide will be relevant to you regardless of whether you intend staying for a few months (until the situation improves in Ukraine) or whether you intend to stay in the U.K. long term and settle here.

Please note this is general guidance only designed to help connect doctors and medical students to the appropriate sources of support. Please check your individual circumstances and eligibility with the relevant organisations.

For Doctors

Doctors will be able to work and claim benefits upon arrival in the U.K. Working as a doctor in the U.K. will take a while to organise since you need to have your qualifications recognised, sit exams and an English Language test, and be approved to join the medical register of the General Medical Council.

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the body that regulates all doctors in the U.K. You can't work as a doctor in the U.K. without being on the GMC register. There are three categories of registration – the general register (for doctors without specialisation), the specialist register (for doctors who are trained as specialists) and the GP register (for doctor who are trained as general practitioners/family doctors).

GMC registration

Most International Medical Graduates will have to sit exams before working in the U.K. There are some exceptions including if you did your primary medical degree in the U.K. or have a recognised medical degree from an EEA country or Switzerland.

The GMC recognises some (but not all) Ukrainian medical school degrees. If recognised, you would need to do an English exam (such as IELTS or OET) and then the two medical exams (PLAB part 1 and 2) to get on the GMC register and work as a doctor.

The GMC doesn't list the Ukrainian medical degrees that they recognise **but they list the ones they DON'T recognise:**

- Lugansk State Medical University located in Lugansk (students who began or completed their studies after 30 September 2014)

- Crimea State Medical University named after S I Georgievsky (students who began their studies after 1 March 2014)
- Crimean Medical Institute (students who began their studies after 1 March 2014)
- Vernadsky Crimean Federal University S.I. Georgievsky Medical Academy (students who began their studies after 1 March 2014)

And they list one that they MIGHT recognise:

- Lugansk State Medical University located in Rubizhne (only for students who have transferred from another medical school)

That leaves (by a process of elimination) the following 19 medical schools which are listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools. To be recognised by the GMC the medical school needs to be listed in the World Directory and the curriculum must conform to certain requirements.

1. Bogomolets National Medical University
2. Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy Institute of Medicine
3. Bukovinian State Medical University
4. Danylo Halytsky Lviv National Medical University
5. Dnipro Institute of Medicine and Public Health
6. Dnipro Medical Institute of Traditional and Non-Traditional Medicine
7. Dnipro State Medical University
8. Donetsk National Medical University Faculty of General Medicine
9. Ya. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University
10. International Academy of Ecology and Medicine
11. International European University European Medical School
12. International Humanitarian University Odessa Medical Institute
13. Ivano-Frankivsk National Medical University
14. Kharkiv Institute of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
15. Kharkiv International Medical University
16. Kharkiv National Medical University
17. Kyiv International University Medical Institute
18. Kyiv Medical University Faculty of Medicine
19. Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University Medical Institute

For further information on the GMCs criteria for recognition of overseas medical qualifications see this link:

[Acceptable overseas qualifications - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](http://gmc-uk.org)

The GMC has a decision aid to help find your route to registration which will be helpful.

[Apply for registration - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](http://gmc-uk.org)

English Language Test and PLAB exams

The Professional And Linguistic Assessments Board test (PLAB) is the test the GMC uses to make sure international medical graduates meet the standard for the medical register.

If your medical degree is from a U.K. university or a university from the EEA or Switzerland, then you won't need to sit the PLAB, but EEA/Swiss graduates will still need to sit an English Language Test.

You will need to sit an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test or an Occupational English Test (OET). The OET is an English Language Test specifically for healthcare professionals so is preferable and more relevant, but both are accepted.

[Using your IELTS certificate - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](http://gmc-uk.org)

[Using your OET certificate - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org)

The PLAB Part 1 is a written multiple-choice exam and Part 2 is a practical objective structured clinical exam (OSCE). You need to pass both parts before you can apply for registration with a licence to practice medicine in the U.K. The GMC has said that they will prioritise PLAB places for refugee doctors and provide free or discounted exam fees for refugees (see links section).

[PLAB \(Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board\) - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org)

Employment options before GMC registration

You will be able to apply for work as soon as you arrive in the UK. Your local authority will provide guidance on how to look for work, access to the nearest job centre, and help for applying for any benefits you are entitled to, such as Job Seekers Allowance. Refugee charities can also help with skills training and looking for work (see links section).

Work in Healthcare

You won't be able to work as a doctor in the U.K. until you are registered with the GMC. You can work in any other jobs in the NHS that don't need a qualification such as a Healthcare Assistant. You will need a basic understanding of English to be able to work. The advantage of working in the NHS, while awaiting to sit your exams and get on the medical register, is that you will familiarise yourself with the U.K. healthcare system, while also improving your knowledge of English and medical English in particular.

Contact your local hospital and ask to speak their Human Resources department or search for jobs using the national NHS jobs website:

[NHS Jobs - Candidate Homepage](https://www.jobs.nhs.uk)

Medical Support Worker

Due to COVID a new role was created in the NHS of "Medical Support Worker" for medical doctors who weren't yet registered with the GMC. This was relevant to doctors who had been out of work for some time, as well as refugee doctors who hadn't completed GMC registration yet. Medical Support workers work at band 6 level under consultant supervision. To be eligible to apply for this role you need to have good English language skills and have passed an English Language Exam (IELTS or OET). At present the scheme is not open for new applicants but may be reopened in the future.

[Coronavirus » Medical support workers \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk)

[Medical Support Worker Scheme for Refugee Doctors | London \(hee.nhs.uk\)](https://www.hee.nhs.uk)

[Covid-19: Refugee doctors join NHS through innovative scheme | The BMJ](https://www.bmj.com)

Work outside healthcare

You can apply for any job outside of healthcare. The job centre can assist you to find a job that matches your skills and abilities. The better your English the more opportunities you will have. If you have a Ukrainian driving license, it is valid in the U.K. for 12 months, so that could open up jobs as a delivery driver for example.

After the Homes for Ukraine visa period ends

If you want to settle in the U.K. long term, you will be able to apply for a Tier 2 work visa when the scheme ends,. Usually after 5 years on a visa you can apply for indefinite leave to remain and then later for British citizenship. It's unclear at present whether the Homes for Ukraine 3-year visa will count towards Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Examples

1. You are a Ukrainian national with Ukrainian medical degree and have come to the U.K. on a Homes for Ukraine visa – Your medical degree may be recognised by GMC, but you will need to sit an English Language exam and PLAB exams - probably 95% of all Ukrainian refugees.
2. You are a Ukrainian national with a non-Ukrainian medical degree (e.g., from Latvia, Estonia, or Poland) on a Homes for Ukraine visa – Your medical degree will be recognised if it is a U.K. or EEA/Swiss degree but you will still need to do an English Language Exam (EEA/Swiss degrees). For all other degrees your medical degree may be recognised by GMC, but you will need to sit an English Language exam and PLAB exams.
3. You are a non-Ukrainian national with Ukrainian medical degree on a Homes for Ukraine visa– Your medical degree may be recognised by GMC, but you will need to sit an English Language exam and PLAB exams.
4. You are a non-Ukrainian national with a non-Ukrainian medical degree on a Homes for Ukraine visa - Your medical degree will be recognised if it is a U.K. or EEA/Swiss degree but you will still need to do an English Language Exam (EEA/Swiss degrees). For all other degrees your medical degree may be recognised by GMC, but you will need to sit an English Language exam and PLAB exams.

The GMC has a decision aid to help find your route to registration which will be helpful.

[Apply for registration - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org)

Personal experience of a Ukrainian doctor working in the UK.

"I did my medical degree in Ukraine.

I found my way through IELTS and PLABs quite difficult, but I now realise this could have been much easier if I had approached it correctly. It takes about a year to complete (provided your English is very good already).

Improving my English was a very time-consuming part of it and preparation for IELTS took some time too. There are well-known approaches and resources how to prepare for IELTS properly. From my experience very few Ukrainian doctors have sufficient command to take IELTS straightaway. Most of them would need to improve English first.

Passing PLAB 1 is a difficult task and requires thorough studying of 2 handbooks: Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine and Oxford Handbook of Clinical Specialties. Also, revision of question banks is very helpful. I think somebody who just finished medical school would be in a much-much better position than somebody who graduated 20 years ago. But in any case, this is doable in most cases – it just takes a different amount of time and effort.

PLAB 2 can be very difficult if you try to prepare by reading books and have limited amount of practice. On the other hand, it can be a relatively easy and a useful part of preparation to medical practice in the U.K. if one approaches it right. The best way is to attend a structured 10- or 14-days preparation course available on the market and then spend 3-4 weeks of constant revision on site. Most of courses provide accommodation and students just live there and practice in groups - in my experience it's the best way to approach it. Practice in groups is key for PLAB 2."

Links

GMC support for Refugee doctors

[A statement from the GMC on the situation in Ukraine - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](#)

[Help for refugee doctors - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](#)

[Help with fees for refugees - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](#)

Support for refugees looking for work

[Employment Programme— RefuAid](#)

[Employment - Breaking Barriers \(breaking-barriers.co.uk\)](#)

British Medical Association support for refugee doctors

[Help for refugee doctors \(bma.org.uk\)](#)

Mentoring for Refugee doctors

[JCORE - Refugee Doctors](#)

Regional help

Some regions have specific programmes for refugee doctors with extra funding for support. These might include free English language courses or free PLAB preparation courses. If you are going to live in any of the following areas, please contact the appropriate organisation using the links below.

Refugee doctors in Scotland [Doctors Programme \(bridgesprogrammes.org.uk\)](#)

Refugee doctors in London [Building Bridges Programme for Refugee Health Professionals in London - Refugee Council](#)

Refugee doctors in North West England [Support available \(wordpress.com\)](#)

Refugee doctors in Lincolnshire <https://lincsrefugeedoctors.co.uk>

Refugee doctors in Wales [Support for refugee doctors via WARD - HEIW \(nhs.wales\)](#)

Refugee doctors near Birmingham [HEFMA](#)

Medical Academics

If you are an academic (a medical researcher or professor employed by a medical school) Cara can provide specific support.

Medical Academics [Ukraine Crisis : Cara](#)

Specialty specific support

Some Specialty colleges offer specific support for refugee doctors such as access to courses through an affiliate scheme or specialist counselling services.

Anaesthetics [Refugee Buddy | The Royal College of Anaesthetists \(rcoa.ac.uk\)](#)

Obstetrics & Gynaecology [Guidance for refugee doctors | RCOG](#)

Ophthalmology [Working in the UK for non-UK Doctors | The Royal College of Ophthalmologists \(rcophth.ac.uk\)](#)

Pathologists [Information for refugee pathologists in the UK \(rcpath.org\)](#)

Physicians (Edinburgh) [College announces support for refugee doctors in the UK | Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh \(rcpe.ac.uk\)](#)

Psychiatry [Ukraine crisis resources \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](#)

Surgeons [Refugee Surgeons — Royal College of Surgeons \(rcseng.ac.uk\)](#)

Surgeons (Edinburgh) [Exam Policies and Procedures | RCSEd](#)

Financial support

There are several charities that can offer financial support to doctors in need such as:

BMA charity financial support [Type of support | BMA Charities](#)

Royal Medical Benevolent Fund support [Financial Help for Refugee Doctors in the UK - RMBF](#)

General support for Refugees

Refugee council [Support and information for people affected by the crisis in Ukraine - Refugee Council](#)

For Medical Students

If you are a medical student from Ukraine coming to the U.K. on a Homes for Ukraine Visa you may be able to continue your studies in the UK.

The U.K. Medical Schools Council is working with Universities in Ukraine to make electronic learning materials available and to support final year medical students in the delivery of their Ukrainian exams. All Ukrainian medical students in the U.K. should contact them via ukraine@medlinstudents.com for further information.

[A statement from the Medical Schools Council on supporting Ukrainian medical schools and their students | Medical Schools Council \(medschools.ac.uk\)](#)

Generally speaking:

If your university offers distance learning options, you may be able to continue with your studies online. If your university has overseas electives as part of the curriculum, you may be able to arrange an elective in the U.K. which could count towards your Ukrainian degree.

Transferring to a U.K. medical school to complete your studies will be complicated because places are limited, and curricula may be very different. If you are aiming to stay in the U.K. long term and in your early years of medical school, it may be easier to apply for general entry to a U.K. medical school and start from the beginning again. If you are close to finishing your degree, it may be easier to try and continue your studies through distance learning or defer until the situation in Ukraine improves.

Medical Electives

Medical electives are clinical placements undertaken as part of your degree. These vary in length but typically are between 4 to 6 weeks in a specific team or department.

To arrange an elective, contact your local acute or mental health trust and ask to speak to the medical education department. Sometimes they have information about electives and how to apply online. There are no set fees for electives. Some trust charge administrative fees while others don't charge anything at all.

Make sure that any elective you arrange will be accepted by your university and that the hosting organisation and your U.K. supervisors are clear on what is needed and what your sign off requirements are.

Studying Medicine in the UK

Medical degrees in the U.K. are typically 5 years long or 4 years for graduate entry programmes (where students already have a university degree).

Most medical schools are state run, although there are a few newer private medical schools.

Fees

Domestic students pay tuition fees of around 9000 pounds a year but have the option of taking out a government backed student loan to cover all tuition fees. This is paid back as a deduction on your salary after graduation.

International students pay much more than the domestic rate and usually aren't able to get U.K. student loans.

[Applying to Medical School - The Guide for 2022 Entry. — Premed Projects](#)

[Student finance for undergraduates: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Links

Medical Schools Council

[A statement from the Medical Schools Council on supporting Ukrainian medical schools and their students | Medical Schools Council \(medschools.ac.uk\)](#)

Medical Schools financial support/bursaries for refugees

Some medical schools offer bursaries to refugees. This is not an exhaustive list, so you are advised to contact medical schools directly for more information.

The British Medical Association also offers financial support to medical students and doctors.

Lincoln [Ukraine](#) | [International Students](#) | [University of Lincoln](#)

Imperial [New funds to support refugees and asylum seekers at Imperial](#) | [Imperial News](#) | [Imperial College London](#)

Bristol [Ukraine](#) | [International students](#) | [University of Bristol](#)

Queen Mary University of London [Information for students from Ukraine - Queen Mary University of London \(qmul.ac.uk\)](#)

BMA charity financial support [Type of support](#) | [BMA Charities](#)

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in Association with the Ukrainian Medical Association of the U.K.



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