



News Release

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Partnership opens doors for students from adverse backgrounds

Some of the world's most disadvantaged students are to benefit from a new partnership between two universities.

The collaboration between the University of Edinburgh and the California-based University of the People aims to support those uprooted by war, famine and natural disasters.

Health Science graduates from the University of the People – the world's first non-profit, tuition-free, accredited online university – will be eligible to apply to Edinburgh to complete a bachelor's degree in Health, Science and Society. The initiative will later be expanded to include other subjects.

Refugees living in Scotland can begin learning online with the University of the People (UoPeople). Once they have achieved their qualifications, students may have the opportunity to transfer to Edinburgh.

The programme is open to students with permission to stay in the UK as a refugee and domiciled in Scotland, and Syrian nationals domiciled in Scotland with humanitarian protection in the UK.

Students worldwide, who have completed UoPeople undergraduate programmes, may also be able to enter Edinburgh postgraduate programmes via online distance learning.

The partnership reflects the University of Edinburgh's commitment to providing educational opportunities for disadvantaged people around the world.

The University of the People aims to provide higher education to students worldwide, despite various constraints, by offering accessible and affordable online degree programmes.

So far, it has accepted more than 1000 refugees to its programmes, among them 500 Syrians, and asylum seekers from more than 40 countries, including many studying in war zones.

Founded in 2009, it currently has more than 10,000 students from more than 200 countries and its student-body will double in number over the next year.

As part of the agreement, University of Edinburgh Principal Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea has joined UoPeople's President's Council.

Ranked among the top universities in the world

Professor O'Shea said: "The University of Edinburgh is proud to partner with the University of the People. Edinburgh strongly believes in supporting talented scholars and academics from around the world. We recognise that Edinburgh can make an important contribution by collaborating with the University of the People and enabling their most successful students to study with us."

President of the University of the People, Shai Reshef said: "We believe that the best way to integrate refugees into their new countries is by letting them complete their degrees in local universities. We are thrilled to partner with the University of Edinburgh."

Vice-Chancellor Emeritus of Oxford University Professor Sir Colin Lucas, a UoPeople President's Council member and head of its Emergency Refugees Initiative, said: "The key to change is education. Possessing a degree will not only impact on the personal circumstances of refugee students, their families and communities. It will also hold significant value for the future economic and social development of refugees' host countries."

Professor Sue Welburn, Vice Principal Global Access at the University of Edinburgh, said: "Collaborating with the University of the People to support displaced people in Scotland is a wonderful initiative that fits into Edinburgh's mission to create access to education for students worldwide, especially those affected by conflict."

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