

Refugee
Rights

Turkey

Mülteci
Hakları

Merkezi

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION
for Persons Seeking International Protection in
Turkey

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Türkiye’de Uluslararası Koruma Arayan Kişiler İçin
EĞİTİM HAKKI

I am seeking international protection in Turkey. Do my children and I have the right to education in Turkey?

Registering your international protection application with the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) is a critical step in accessing the right to education in Turkey. Following your interview with DGMM authorities, you will be given an “International Protection Applicant Identity Card.” This document is free of charge and shall include your Foreigners’ ID Number starting with 99. This number will be essential in ensuring your access to primary, secondary and higher education as well as to Turkish language courses and vocational training.

I have a primary school-aged child. How can I send him/her to school?

As per current legislation, regardless of their legal status and gender, all children have the right to compulsory education in Turkey. Thus, your child is entitled to access education at public schools.

Compulsory and free education in Turkey is 12 years and has three stages: 4 years of primary school (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade), 4 years of lower-secondary school (5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade), and 4 years of upper-secondary school (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade). The language of instruction in public schools is Turkish.

How can I enroll my child in public school for compulsory education? Do I have to pay tuition? Will my child receive a diploma?

You may enroll your child in public schools in your place of residence with your “International Protection Applicant Identity Card” or with your “International Protection Status Holder ID.” Enrollment procedures are determined by the Provincial Education Commission at the province; however, in general, it is important to present documents demonstrating previous school attendance, certificates, or diplomas. If you do not have these documents, the Provincial Education Commission and, in some provinces, the District Education Commission, will carry out a grade placement test, either oral, written, or in some cases both. Following this assessment, your child will be placed in the appropriate grade level.

However, if you have not completed your registration or if you do not have a Foreigners’ ID Number, you may still enroll your child in public schools. In the absence of these documents, your child will be enrolled as a guest student. It is possible to change this “guest status” once you obtain your Foreigners’ ID Number.

Education is free in all public schools. The language of instruction in public schools is Turkish and classes are carried out in accordance with Turkish curriculum. Students who have successfully fulfilled requirements in public schools are entitled to receive a diploma.

I want to enroll in a high school. What should I do?

Children who have successfully completed 8 years of compulsory education are entitled to enroll in high schools. It is therefore important to present documents demonstrating previous school attendance to the Provincial Directorate of Education in your satellite city.

If you do not have any documents demonstrating your child's previous school attendance, you must approach the Provincial Education Commission in your satellite city for a grade placement test. The Provincial Directorate of Education will carry out an assessment and notify you about the results and placement. Following this notification, you can enroll your child at the school where he/she has been placed. It is important to have an "International Protection Applicant Identity Card" which bears a Foreigners' ID Number starting with "99." If you face any difficulty during registration, please approach the Provincial or Sub-Provincial Directorates of Education.

Can persons seeking international protection enroll in universities in Turkey?

The completion of primary and secondary education in Turkey is required prior to enrolling in higher education. Students who have completed their education in public schools in Turkey will have fulfilled this criterion.

All foreigners who wish to enroll in universities in Turkey should take the Examination for Foreign Students (YÖS) organized by universities. You may be required to pay an application fee to take this exam. In addition, universities have the discretion to request additional documents related to the applicant's previous education. We therefore recommend that you consult the Foreign Student Departments or university websites for detailed information on requirements and for announcements.

It is important to note that you are not required to withdraw your international protection application in order to enroll in universities in Turkey. If your university is in a province other than your assigned "... city," you will need to submit a petition to the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM) authorities and request a "satellite city" change on this ground. Please attach your university placement result and relevant documents demonstrating your enrollment to this petition.

Please also bear in mind that as your address shall change upon changing your “satellite city,” you are required to communicate your new address to PDMM authorities in your new “satellite city” within 20 working days. Should you fail to do so, you may risk an administrative fine.

Are there scholarships available for students?

There are a number of scholarships available for students. You should approach either the Provincial or Sub-Provincial Directorates of Education or civil society organizations working with refugees in Turkey for further information.

I want to learn Turkish. Who can help me?

All children, young persons and adults who wish to learn Turkish may approach Public Education Centers (Halk Eğitim Merkezi). These centers provide free courses and you are required to present your “International Protection Applicant Identity Card” to register with these centers. In addition, several civil society organizations also run free Turkish language courses.

I want to receive vocational training. What are my opportunities?

You may approach the Public Education Centers to receive vocational training. These courses are free. However, please be aware that each Public Education Center has the right to determine course offerings and may open new courses on demand. We therefore recommend that you approach your local Public Education Center to inquire about available courses. Please also note that you will be required to present your “International Protection Applicant Identity Card” or your “International Protection Status Holder ID” before you can enroll in these courses.

The Turkish Labor Agency (İŞKUR) also runs several vocational courses. You may approach İŞKUR offices to ask about course availability in your city of registration. Finally, there are other civil society organizations that provide free skills training, hobby, and vocational courses.

How can Refugee Rights Turkey help me?

Refugee Rights Turkey provides free information and assistance to persons seeking international protection and those under temporary protection in Turkey. You may approach our office with questions concerning access to protection mechanisms in Turkey and fundamental rights and freedoms.

Is Refugee Rights Turkey related to the Turkish government or to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)?

No. Refugee Rights Turkey is an independent civil society organization. It is not an implementing partner of the Turkish government or UNHCR. However, Refugee Rights Turkey cooperates with relevant Turkish authorities and UNHCR to ensure the legal protection of persons seeking international protection and those under temporary protection in Turkey.

Do I need to pay for services provided by Refugee Rights Turkey?

No. All services provided by Refugee Rights Turkey are free of charge. Should you become aware of any person or entity claiming to be acting in our name who requests any money or other financial benefit, please report them immediately to our office. We will maintain your confidentiality.

Will Refugee Rights Turkey keep my information confidential?

Refugee Rights Turkey operates under a principle of strict confidentiality and respects the privacy of individuals in contact with our office. Thus, we do not share your information or documents with any third parties without your consent.

Refugee Rights Turkey – Contact Information:

Wherever you may be in Turkey, you are welcome to visit our office or get in touch with us by telephone, fax or email all weekdays (Monday to Friday) from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

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Refugee Rights Turkey



Refugee Solidarity Network



US Department of State
Bureau of Population,
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