



British Embassy
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CITIZENS' RIGHTS NEWSLETTER

A monthly update for UK nationals resident in Belgium
under the Withdrawal Agreement

In this month's edition, we are looking at **education** and **academic qualifications**.

[You can find previous editions here.](#)

◆ NEWS UPDATE ◆

SURVEY

Our second survey received over 200 responses - thank you to all who contributed!

We have met again with the Office for Foreigners to discuss the concerns that were raised, including regarding specific communes / gemeenten.

FACEBOOK Q&A

There will be no Facebook Q&A session during August, but you can of course continue to [direct your questions to our web form here](#).

What does the Withdrawal Agreement say about education?

For those covered by the Withdrawal Agreement (i.e. UK nationals lawfully resident in the EU before 1 January 2021 or EU nationals in the UK), **equal treatment** principles continue to apply. This means they can continue to live, work, **study** and access benefits and services - such as healthcare - in the country where they live, broadly as before the UK left the EU.

If a UK national was living in an EU country, such as Belgium, before 1 January 2021, they have the same rights to **access education** as nationals of that country. They also retain home fee status in their country of residence, the fee rate that students who live in that country are charged.

[Further guidance for UK nationals studying in Europe is available on GOV.UK.](#)

How do I protect my rights as a student in Belgium under the Withdrawal Agreement?

As is the case for all UK nationals legally resident in Belgium before 1 January 2021, students must apply for the M card, which is the new residency card for UK nationals and their non-EU family members in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement.

Your residency rights under the Withdrawal Agreement are not affected if you decide to 'change status'. For example, after your studies in Belgium, you can become a worker here.

What documents will I need to show when registering?

All M card applicants must provide a valid passport and a legalised criminal record extract no older than six months.

If you registered as a student before 1 January 2021 at your commune / gemeente, and were issued with an E card, you should not be asked for the below evidence again as part of your M card application.

If you did not start the registration process before the end of last year, you may also be asked for the following:

- proof that you are enrolled at a recognised institution
- proof that you have sufficient means of subsistence
- proof that you have sickness insurance (e.g. Belgian *mutuelle* health insurance, private sickness insurance, foreign public sickness insurance such as a UK-issued EHIC/GHIC)

[You can find additional information on the M card application process on the Office for Foreigners' website.](#)

What about studying back in the UK?

Entry to the UK

If you have UK citizenship, you can live in the UK and do not need to take further action in terms of immigration requirements to do so. This also applies to UK nationals with a second nationality ('dual nationals').

UK nationals going into a UK primary or secondary school

Primary and secondary school places continue to be freely available, without fees, to all appropriately aged UK nationals returning to the UK from overseas.

[Check the 'Returning to the UK' pages for more information.](#)

Higher education fees in the UK

Fees statuses are entirely dependent on residency status, both in the UK and the EU. Prior to the UK's departure from the EU, there were three main fee status categories: Home UK, Home EU, and International. The 'Home EU' fee status has now been removed, leaving 'Home' fees and 'Overseas' fees.

7-year offer for returning UK nationals going into UK higher/further education

The UK Government has extended fee and funding eligibility for UK nationals living in the EU/EEA or Switzerland who start their higher education, 19+ further education or apprenticeship places for **7 years after the end of the transition period** (31 December 2020), known as the "7-year offer".

UK nationals returning to the UK to attend higher and 19+ further education courses are eligible for home fee status and can access higher and further education student finance, or be funded for a 19+ further education course, provided that **the course starts before 1 January 2028**. The UK national does not need to have previously lived in the UK to benefit from this offer.

Note that you must only have started the course before 1 January 2028 and the same rules will continue to apply for the duration of the course.

Support from Student Finance will continue to be subject to meeting the eligibility criteria as per the below links.

The children of UK nationals will also be eligible for support on the same terms, even if they are not themselves UK nationals, as long as both the UK national and their children meet these conditions.

Further guidance on support for higher and further education can be found on the following links:

- [England - GOV.UK](#)
- [Wales - GOV.WALES](#)
- [Scotland - GOV.SCOT](#)
- [Northern Ireland - nidirect](#)

Recognition of Academic Qualifications

Unlike professional qualifications, there has never been an automatic recognition of academic diplomas across the EU, and EU Member States are responsible for their own education systems.

It is therefore up to individual Member States, higher education institutions or employers, as to whether they recognise an individual's academic diploma, or ask that the individual request recognition via a national procedure.

If you need your academic degree/diploma recognised, you must contact the **ENIC/NARIC centre** in the country where you want the assessment to take place, either your EU country of residency or the country where you wish to study or work. [You can check the European Commission's website for further information.](#)

Please note that this is separate to professional qualifications, which fall under [EU Directive 2005/36/EC](#) and under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

What about travel to other EU member states?

Students can travel to other Member States for up to 90 days in any 180-day period (e.g. a holiday) during their studies in Belgium, without their stay in Belgium ending.

However, UK nationals currently living in Belgium and wishing to move to another Member State will be treated as third-country nationals on arrival, e.g. moving to start a university course in Luxembourg this autumn. You should explore the precise details and provisions within the relevant country's domestic immigration system.

July Facebook Q&A - key takeaways

Pet travel

For rules on pet travel between the UK and the EU, have a look at our May newsletter which covered requirements in detail. [Click here to see the rules.](#)

Working and studying

With regards to working while studying in Belgium, beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement continue to be covered by the rules applicable to EU nationals. Under the WA, you can hold multiple statuses so can be a student and a worker at the same time.

[Click here to see all the questions received at this month's Facebook Q&A](#) (no Facebook account needed).

Upcoming Embassy Events

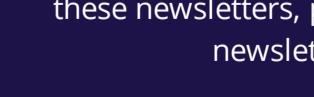
6 October from 18:00 to 19:30
Online Outreach Event on Microsoft Teams

We will share the link to register in our August newsletter and via our social media channels.

Tell a Friend

If you know any UK nationals living in Belgium who would benefit from receiving these newsletters, please spread the word! They can sign up to receive the newsletter by [sending a blank email using this link](#).

Stay in Touch



Find the latest information on our [Living in Belgium guide](#)

If you have any questions not answered by the online information, you can send us your queries via our [webform](#).

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