



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Briefing Note

Paper 170/12

16 October 2012

NIAR 714-2012

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Scottish Universities – Proof of Residence

1 Introduction

The following paper briefly discusses the proof of residency requirements needed to be met in order to attend Scottish Universities.

2 Proof of Residence

Guidance from the Department for Education and Training states that:¹

With effect from the 2013/14 academic year, dual nationals are not entitled to receive equal treatment with UK nationals normally resident in Scotland in relation to entitlement to be charged regulated fees and the availability of tuition fee support from SAAS simply because they are also a national of an EU member state other than the UK.

¹ Employability, Skills and Lifelong Learning Directorate, 15 September 2012, Scottish Government Policy Guidance: Regulated Tuition Fees and Tuition Fee Support for Dual Nationals

It goes on to state:²

We will, however, continue to ensure compliance with EU law. That will include ensuring that equal treatment with UK nationals normally resident in Scotland is afforded to dual nationals where EU law so requires (e.g. where that dual national has exercised the right of free movement, or where they have resided in the relevant other EU member state).

As such, students applying to Scottish Universities claiming dual nationality must now provide proof of residence (please see Appendix 1 for a copy of the Circular). As stated on the Student Awards Agency website:³

In order to qualify for a tuition fee award as an EU (non UK) national, they [student applicants] must have exercised their right of residence elsewhere in the EEA or Switzerland, which includes the member state of which they are a national, before their relevant date.

Currently, Proof of Residence is determined on a case by case basis, with the burden of proof lying with the student. Evidence such as utility bills and council tax statements (essentially any official documentation that can prove an individual lived at a specific address during a cited period) is accepted.⁴ Discussions with officials based in the Higher Education and Learning Support Unit in the Scottish Government identified that there are no published guidelines regarding what constitutes proof of residence:

In terms of evidence for the purposes of assessing fees it will be for the institution to satisfy themselves on a case by case basis that a student has at some point resided in the member state of which they are a national, or have exercised their right of residence elsewhere in the EEA/Switzerland. Similarly SAAS will need to do the same for students applying for tuition fee support. They will need to decide, based on an individual's circumstances what evidence is appropriate.⁵

UCAS advice regarding dual nationality applications to Scottish Universities is to:⁶

...contact the institution to which you are planning to apply and they will advise you on how your fee status is likely to be regarded.

It should be noted that the Scottish Government is currently developing amendments to the Fees Regulations and the Allowances Regulations (intended to be in force prior to academic year 2013-14) which will take into consideration the issue of dual nationality. It is not known at this stage what, if any, requirements this will make on Proof of Residency.

² Ibid

³ SAAS, Student Funding Changes for 2013-14 http://www.saas.gov.uk/student_support/funding_update.htm

⁴ Discussions with Student Awards Agency Scotland

⁵ Communication from the Higher Education and Learning Support Unit, Scottish Government

⁶ UCAS, Student Finance, <http://www.ucas.ac.uk/parents/studentfinance>