



# Access Counseling Program

Duolingo English Test will hire a university counselor to support UNHCR and work with refugees to advise them through the university admissions and financial aid process.

## BACKGROUND

Applying for university study is a complex and stressful process for everyone—but for refugees, it is even more prohibitive, and only 3% of all refugees ever enroll at a university. [Duolingo English Test](#) and [UNHCR](#) endeavor to change the narrative for refugee students and their prospects for higher education. The Duolingo English Test team, through their work in international education, recognized that refugees are underserved and underrepresented in higher education in part because they lack university counseling support.

Support from an experienced university counselor can be transformational for refugees being admitted and enrolling in university study. Refugees must navigate an already complicated application process—made more complex due to incomplete documentation related to their refugee status. In addition, they must receive a full scholarship from that university, which requires significant knowledge about financial aid as well as the schools and organizations that provide it.

Duolingo English Test is proud and honored to support UNHCR's [15by30](#) initiative, which aims to increase refugee enrollment in higher education to 15% by 2030. We believe the counseling program will be transformative in creating a framework for refugees' access to higher education.

“Higher education turns students into leaders, amplifying their voices and enabling rapid generational change. Yet only 3% of the 80 million forcibly displaced persons around the world have access to it. We are proud to partner with Duolingo to reduce barriers to higher education for some of the world's most vulnerable people.”

—Matt Reynolds, UNHCR Regional Representative for the United States and the Caribbean

“Many refugees lack access to high-quality education, which is critical in order to thrive in their countries of resettlement. We believe that this program can lower barriers to higher education and improve the livelihood of refugees around the world.”

—Luis von Ahn, Duolingo CEO and Co-Founder

## DETAILS

Duolingo English Test will hire a full-time university counselor to work with up to 25 students from targeted regions of the world. This counselor will have expertise in advising high-achieving, high-financial-need refugee applicants.

To ensure students are admitted to universities and receive the requisite funding to attend, the counselor will provide refugee students with a high-level of support and guidance. This work, in partnership with UNHCR's local operations, will include:

- Researching and identifying a list of appropriate universities based on the students' personal and academic background and interests.
- Helping to navigate worldwide university entrance requirements and processes.
- Ensuring the students meet application requirements, including availability of school transcripts, leaving exams, standardized testing, recommendation letters, essays, and resumes.
- Supporting the students in presenting the most compelling application possible, through essay writing workshops, help with resumes, preparation for interviews, etc.
- Helping secure funding opportunities including competitive merit scholarships and need-based financial aid.

## TIMELINE

Duolingo English Test will open a search for a counselor for this role in late 2021. The intention is to begin work with a cohort of students in the spring of 2022 and enroll in universities for undergraduate study in the fall of 2023.

## INQUIRIES

Please email [institutional+access@duolingo.com](mailto:institutional+access@duolingo.com)

## SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

**Duolingo English Test** is an innovative and accessible English proficiency assessment for today's students and institutions. Digital-first and learner-first, the test is available online, on demand—while using subject matter experts and AI to ensure it is reliable and secure. Brought to you by Duolingo, the most popular way to learn a language, whose mission is to lower barriers to education.

**UNHCR**, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organization working to save lives, protect rights and build a better future for refugees, internally displaced communities, and stateless people. We work to ensure that everybody has the right to seek asylum and find refuge from violence or persecution. During times of displacement, UNHCR staff in 134 countries work diligently to ensure the protection of people forced to flee, strengthen access to education and livelihoods, and provide life-saving support like shelter, water, food, and health care. UNHCR partners with governments, non-profit organizations, and private-sector companies to support forcibly displaced people and the communities hosting them.