

Sophia University (Sophia)

(For candidates with sufficient language skills for **pursuing a degree in English**)

UNHCR Refugee Higher Education Program (RHEP) is a program implemented by partner universities and coordinated by UNHCR Representation in Japan and RHEP Alliance (hereinafter referred to as “the RHEP Secretariat”).

The program will select up to **one candidate** for recommendation to Sophia's Faculty of Liberal Arts (English course).

- 1) Faculty and Department: Faculty of Liberal Arts
- 2) Number of refugee candidates to be recommended: maximum one (for completion of the degree in English)
- 3) Eligibility criteria: the candidate must -
 - a) be a refugee or a person in need of international protection with a residency permit granted by the Japanese authorities (excluding Japanese nationals);
 - b) have either successfully completed or is scheduled to complete by March of the admission year, a twelve-year course of formal education in Japan or another country, or is deemed by Sophia to have an education level equivalent to that of the average person who has completed such formal education;
 - c) have no other means of support for university studies;
 - d) understand that the objective of the program is for the selected candidate to commit to their studies diligently, and agree to maintain a satisfactory academic performance in their chosen undergraduate study course (the course duration will be a maximum of four years);
 - e) have **English language skills** sufficient for pursuing a degree from any of Sophia's schools that offer a curriculum in English; and
 - f) meet other criteria for applicants as stipulated by Sophia.

Sophia will waive the student's tuition and other admission related fees. Sophia will also fund a scholarship which may be paid to the student on a monthly basis as per internal regulations of the university.

Process for selection of candidates to be recommended for admission by UNHCR and RHEP Alliance:

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| ● Application period for RHEP | From 3 July (Fri) to 3 August (Mon) 2026 |
| ● Written test | RHEP will assesses candidates' English written proficiency with English test scores. |
| ● Interview | 22 Aug (Sat) and 29 Aug (Sat) 2026 |
| ● Selection of candidates for recommendation to Sophia | The beginning of September 2026 |

Process for selection of candidates for admission by Sophia

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| ● Submission of Application to Sophia* | From 1 October (Thu) to 8 October (Thu) 2026
(Please refer to the application procedure of Sophia for details) |
| ● Exam and Interview | 29 28 November (Sat) 2026 |

- Final results**

(Please refer to the application procedure of Sophia for details)

11 December (Thu) 2026

(Please refer to the application procedure of Sophia for details)

*After review, RHEP Secretariat will forward the required application form to Sophia within the agreed time-frame

**The program selects candidates for recommendation to Sophia, but the final decision as to which candidates are successful is made solely at Sophia's discretion.

3. How to Apply

1) Required Documents

A. RHEP Application Form	The link to the application will be available on the webpage of Refugee Higher Education Program (https://rhepalliance.org/en_application) from 3 July (Fri) 2026 . Forms may change each year , so those who have previously applied to RHEP will need to send a new application with updated information using the forms specifically designed for the year of application.
B. Passport Photo	Please affix a passport photo to the first page of the RHEP Application Form.
C. Academic transcript (High School and University)	Official transcript from the formal educational institution of your last enrollment. The applicant who wish to enter the Faculty of Liberal Arts of Sophia must have an average grade 4.0 or above (out of 5.0) if the applicant graduated/will graduate from Japanese high school, 3.0 or above (out of 4.0) if the applicant graduated/will graduate from international school. Please ensure that the official transcript includes the information listed below. If you are unable to submit an official transcript, please submit a statement of facts describing your educational background, including the items listed below (around 1 page A4 size): • Academic results from the last three years of enrollment, including acquired credits, results, and brief description of the course contents. • Attendance record (indicate any reasons for a long term absence from your classes). • Notable extracurricular activities. • Academic and/or student activity awards and other recognitions. Type of academic institution (Public, private, NGO run institution, etc.), location of the institution, and official language used during the course. Depending on the university of your choice, an official school report (<i>chosasho</i>) may be requested if you have graduated from a Japanese school. Please prepare in advance.
D. Proof of English language proficiency (Mandatory)	The applicant must submit either of the following test scores. The date of the examination must be within two years from the date of application. TOEFL iBT 79 (on 0-120 scale)/4.5 (on 1-6 scale) or above; or IELTS 6.0 or above; or TEAP 340 or above (each section need to be 75 or above); or TEAP CBT 615 or above
E. Performance report of non-formal education (Vocational training,	Official transcript of results from non-formal educational/vocational institutions where such studies/training have been undertaken. Please ensure that the official transcript includes the information below • Performance results from the last three years of enrollment, including acquired credits, results, and brief description of the course contents. If the course is shorter than three years, the report must cover the entire period from admission to completion.

and others) where applicable	- No submission is required where such report is difficult to obtain. - Attendance record (indicate reasons for any long term absence from classes) - Extracurricular activities and other volunteer activities linked with the objectives of the enrolled educational/vocational program. - Performance and/or student activity awards and other recognitions. There are no specified formats for this requirement.
F. One Letter of Recommendation	The letter should be about 1 to 2 pages (A4 size). Please have the referee enclose the letter in an envelope with his/her signature on the seal of the envelope. On the surface of the envelope, please have the referee write the name of the applicant and "Recommendation Letter for the RHEP Application" and hand it to the refugee applicant. The referee must not be a relative of the applicant.
G.Proof of Legal Status	(Note: Please DO NOT send originals. Send only copies.) Applicants must submit BOTH documents a) and b), as well as ONE of the documents listed below from c) to e). a) Documents certifying your residency status; and b) Residency card or resident registration form (<i>juminhyo</i>) which indicates the whole family unit; and c) Certificate of Refugee Status; or d) The Certificate of Settlement Record by the Refugee Assistance Headquarters (for Indo-Chinese refugees);or e) Proof of Refugee Status a) Other documents certifying refugee-like status (for asylum seekers who were granted special permission to stay on the bases of humanitarian considerations, a letter from your lawyer, NGO or other third party who supported you or your family member with the refugee-like status (e.g. your parent) during the time of the refugee application, outlining the application history and describing the reasoning for the result of your/your family's refugee application). b) For those (explicitly or implicitly) provided international protection and never had applied for asylum in Japan: official certificate from a government agency; identity documents; or documents certifying the need of international protection issued by NGO, lawyer or other third party who supported you and your family members at the time of arrival to Japan or at the time of processing residency in Japan, describing the reasoning for your/your family's need for international protection. Additional certificate/document may be requested in cases where the submitted documents do not fulfil the requirements. c) Certificate of Complementary Protection
H. Proof of Family's Financial Situation	Applicants must submit documents indicating all the income of members of the family who contribute to the household finances, including his/her father, mother, and him/herself (e.g. tax-income certificate, statement of earnings, etc.). This should be based on earnings from the year before the application. Applicants should indicate the amount of financial support they receive from persons under a duty to support such as relatives (allowance etc.), and if relevant, the amount of scholarship, fellowship, private support, livelihood protection and/or social security payments being received.
Please send the required documents to the following address by simplified registration (<i>kani-kakitome</i>). On the front of the envelope, please write in red "RHEP Application Enclosed".	

- Application packages should be postmarked on or before 3 August (Mon). Application packages that are postmarked after the 3 August (Mon) will, in principle, not be accepted. Interested candidates are advised to send the package well in advance to avoid late applications.
- Note that application packages will not be returned.
- Please refrain from sending numerous applications.

2) **Application Deadline: 3 August (Mon) 2026 (postmarked)**

3) Please submit applications by simplified registration (*kani-kakitome*) to:

c/o RHEP Alliance
 Secretariat of UNHCR Refugee Higher Education Program
 Bancho-Heim #431, 1-2 Nibancho, Chiyoda-ku,
 Tokyo 102-0084

4. Selection of candidates to be recommended to Sophia

The process for the selection of candidates to be recommended will include screening of application materials, examination, and interview.

1) Application Screening:

Applications will be accepted between:

3 July (Fri) and 3 August (Mon) 2026

Please note that applications that arrive after the due date will in principle not be accepted.

A notification letter, indicating whether or not they have been short listed, will be sent by RHEP Secretariat by the middle of August via mail.

2) Examination:

RHEP assesses candidates' English written proficiency with English test scores.

3) Interview:

Date: **22 August (Sat) and 29 August (Sat) 2026**

Location: Online (For details, see the admission ticket for examination that will be distributed to applicants who have passed the document screening.)

The interview date stated above is yet to be confirmed. For the exact date, please refer to the convocation letter and the admission ticket for examination.

The final results are scheduled to be available at the beginning of September via mail.

- Inquiries as to the result will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- The final decision as to the candidate who is to be recommended to Sophia will be made by the selection committee, consisting of UNHCR and RHEP Alliance staff, individuals with educational backgrounds/NGO staff and affiliates from language schools (TBC).
- Based on the discretion of the selection committee, regardless of the number of applicants, not all places may be filled.

5. Recommendation to Sophia and selection by Sophia

Information regarding the selection process by Sophia will be provided to the selected candidate of RHEP at a later date. The final decision as to which candidate is successful is solely at Sophia's discretion.

Accepted students will be asked to fulfill their commitment and responsibilities set by UNHCR as RHEP scholarship students. The students will be required:

- ① to submit progress reports to RHEP Secretariat twice a year;
- ② to regularly participate in follow-up meetings and interviews after graduating from the university; and
- ③ to undertake at least one RHEP project (e.g. participate in a seminar as a speaker) during the time of their studies.

*Details of the abovementioned-reports/assignments will be provided by RHEP Secretariat after students are accepted by the university.

6. Notice and Disclaimer

For the purposes of equity, UNHCR / RHEP Alliance and the selection committee will not respond to inquiries about the application screening process, the content of the examination, and matters relating directly to the result. Furthermore, as the RHEP selection is undertaken by UNHCR and RHEP Alliance, please do not contact Sophia University regarding the program and selection process.

For candidates who have applied for a university located far from your residence, you may need to move at your own cost from your current place of residence at the time of application. In addition, depending on the academic year and desired school or faculty, the location of your campus may change. Please consult carefully with your family (especially if you are a minor) and/or employer when choosing a university and academic program before applying to this program.

UNHCR and RHEP Alliance will protect personal information in conformity with the relevant confidentiality policies. UNHCR and RHEP Alliance will only refer to the applicants' personal information when it is necessary for carrying out operations, including reviewing the program and its outcomes, and gathering statistical data for conducting publicity activities. Applicants' personal information will only be shared with partner universities as and when it is necessary, in order for candidates' recommendation to the relevant university.

*From 2025, the program is coordinated by UNHCR Representation in Japan and RHEP Alliance.