



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Higher Education and Learner Support Division

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Your ref:
Our ref: 2007/0016455OR

21 May 2007

Dear Ms Morrison

Thank you for your letter of 22 March 2007 to the First Minister about asylum seekers' access to higher education courses in Scottish Universities. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within the responsibility of the Higher Education and Learner Support Division.

The change to the fee arrangements you suggest to enable asylum seekers to be considered as 'home students' in respect of fees and university place, essentially receiving equivalent treatment to European students, would require a change to secondary legislation. As you are aware, Parliament has now been dissolved for this session and will not resume until after the Scottish election. Ministers are not therefore in a position to make commitments for new policy requiring legislative change at this point in time, and will defer a substantive response to your proposal to the new administration. You will be aware that officials have already begun preliminary work considering the feasibility of your proposal, and will be in a position to brief the incoming administration

I hope that this reply is of assistance.

Yours Sincerely

CLAIRE NEADS
Higher Education and Learner Support