



The Open Society University Network's Hubs for Connected Learning Initiatives

Refugee Higher Education Access Program (RhEAP)

The Refugee Higher Education Access Program (RhEAP), co-led by The Open Society University Network's (OSUN) Hubs for Connected Learning Initiatives and Princeton's Global History Lab, is a 12 to 15-month post-secondary bridging program for learners who have experienced interrupted education due to displacement and are seeking a way into university education. The program addresses a significant preparation gap: high percentages of secondary school leavers in displacement contexts perform too poorly on required exams to transition to a university.¹ Through faculty-taught courses, RhEAP focuses on building strong academic skills in several areas: English language, engaged reading, critical thinking, academic writing, and analysis across disciplines. Delivered in a blended learning format, RhEAP faculty teach the classes online, both synchronously and asynchronously; students come together face-to-face every week with teaching assistants (TAs) and for peer-to-peer support, as well as with faculty for intensive periods of study. The RhEAP curriculum is built around five modules: 1) English/ICT/critical thinking skills-building; 2) Humanities and Social Sciences; 3) STEM; 4) Transition to the integrated classroom; 5) Degree program application and test preparation.

RhEAP is the only comprehensive bridging program for displaced populations that takes a multi-pronged approach to college readiness, including: upskilling students through faculty-taught courses, introducing students to four of the major university disciplines, and supporting test and application preparation. To that end, the program is designed to reach less prepared learners, including girls, especially in camp-based settings. RhEAP currently operates in Camp and urban areas affected by displacement in Eastern Africa and Jordan, with planned expansion to Bangladesh in early 2022. As a program promoting best practices in academic skills building, the program is replicable and scalable in contexts across the globe. Students who complete RhEAP will earn an OSUN Certificate and receive a Bard College transcript with a record of their credits.

¹ For example, in the 2019 Kenyan high school leaving exams Kakuma Camp, over 40% of those who took it were not able to receive a passing grade of a B which is a requirement for transitioning to a university.

Admissions

Students who have been displaced from their home countries and who have not completed a BA degree are eligible to apply. Applicants undergo a qualitative assessment for admission to RhEAP. The first step is an online application form that asks students to respond in writing to questions about their interests, strengths and weaknesses; students can respond in a language other than English, including Arabic and French. The second step is an online or Camp-based interview with RhEAP faculty and TAs. Successful applicants will have demonstrated a commitment to finishing the program and applying to a full BA program. Once admitted, students will be admitted into the Bard College registration system and will take an English language placement test with Arizona State University to determine their level for Module one.

The RhEAP Curriculum

The Curriculum is co-designed and implemented by four OSUN partners: Bard College, Arizona State University (ASU), The Princeton Global History Lab and BRAC University's Center for Peace and Justice.

RhEAP students must complete all modules, following the RhEAP academic calendar. The program builds in flexibility so that learners who need little-to-no English language preparation can move quickly into module two, while those who need additional English language classes can take more time and still move to a module two class upon completion without a significant delay.

The below module breakdown indicates the course title and the OSUN partner that developed the course content. All of the courses except Learn English Now and Be a Successful Online Learner involve synchronous class time.

Module 1: Preparatory Courses

Learn English Now (ASU)

Be a Successful Online Learner (ASU)

A modified Language & Thinking Program (Bard)

By the end of these courses, students will have:

- Developed Academic English Skills
- Experimented with learning online
- Demonstrated a commitment to engage with complicated academic materials

Module 2: Humanities

This module will continue to build Academic English skills, with students beginning the first course at the same time as they are finishing the C2/C1 English levels. The module will also introduce learners to books that have canonized over time and to different methodical approaches, rooted in the humanities and social sciences, for engaging with ideas and concepts.

Course 1: Great Books of the World & Academic Writing (Bard)

Course 2: (Modified) Global History Lab (Princeton)

By the end of these courses, students will have:

- Developed critical thinking skills
- Developed close reading skills
- Developed academic English fluency
- Built collaborative learning strategies
- Applied analysis skills to expository, literary, and argumentative writing
- Evaluated objective and subjective modes of presentation

Module 3: STEM

This module will continue to refine Academic English skills by introducing students to discipline vocabulary, and approaches to research, reasoning and argumentation in the STEM fields.

Course 1: (Modified) Citizen Science program (Bard)

Course 2: Quantitative Reasoning and Research Methods (Princeton)

By the end of these courses, students will have:

- Developed discipline vocabulary
- Developed a core understanding of the conduct and content of science
- Formulated questions that invite scientific inquiry
- Applied scientific reasoning to urgent, contemporary questions
- Investigated objective and subjective approaches to scientific inquiry

Module 4: Transition Courses

This module will integrate learners into credit-bearing blended elective courses with other OSUN students from across the Network. Since this is the first time RhEAP students are taking courses with matriculated students, it will expose them to real-time university expectations and allow them to gauge their own readiness level for a full BA program. Students can take up to two courses during this module.

OSUN Network course (any OSUN campus, up to six US credits)

History Dialogues (Princeton, up to four US credits)

BRAC CPJ course (up to four US credits)

By the end of these courses, students will have:

- Applied knowledge acquired in earlier modules to an integrated discipline course
- Investigated their interest in different disciplinary approaches

Module 5: Application Preparation and Test Taking

This module will support learners who have successfully completed RhEAP modules one through four in identifying and transitioning into a full degree program. The RhEAP partners will bring in graduate students from the OSUN Network and will train Camp-based individuals who already have experience in test taking and application preparation to support learners during this module. Many learners will need to retake the high school leaving exam, while others will need to take TOEFL, IELTS or another standardized tests. Those who are seeking third country education pathways will need support in developing application materials for a specific audience. This module is highly contextualized based on the site, with high school leaving exams and acceptable equivalencies varying from place to place. So, too, this module is flexible in its duration, with students taking up to four months to complete exams and applications.