

## **P-06-1486 Grant BN(O) Hong Kong students home fee status after three years of residence - Correspondence from the Petitioner, 28 February 2025**

Annwyl Vikki, Carolyn and other committee members

Thank you for your response regarding the petition on granting British National (Overseas) visa holders home fee status after three years of residence in Wales. While we acknowledge the commitment to reviewing the policy for the 2026/27 academic year, we have strong concerns about the timeline and the fairness of the current approach. It is unfair that BN(O) visa holders - who are in the UK on humanitarian grounds and are residents of country - are required to pay international fees.

### **1. Residency requirement undermines the principle of offering BN(O) visas**

The UK government provided the BN(O) visa on [humanitarian grounds](#). As such, BN(O) visa holders should receive the same treatment as other humanitarian visa holders. In Wales, those who have come to the country via Afghan and Ukrainian schemes are entitled to home fee status after three years of residency. This is not the case for BN(O) visa holders: they are required five years of residency. The additional requirement is inconsistent and places a barrier for BN(O) visa holders to access higher education.

### **2. Potential Violation of International Human Rights Commitments**

According to [Article 2\(2\)](#) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), all individuals should be treated equally without discrimination. Unlike refugees and some persons who have relocated to Wales under other humanitarian routes, BN(O) students are unfairly not granted home fee status despite the humanitarian basis of their visa.

### **3. Urgency of Policy Review**

While we appreciate the commitment to reviewing the policy for the 2026/27 academic year, this timeline is too late given the significant number of BN(O) students will have enrolled in Welsh universities at the time. Each year, at least 1,000 Hong Kong students begin their studies in Wales, not including those already enrolled. They are required to pay international fees, X times more than the home fees, creating financial difficulties and discouraging them from choosing Wales as a study destination. Given these circumstances, the policy review should begin this year rather than be delayed until 2026.

We urge the Welsh Government to consider these points and initiate a review immediately to ensure fair treatment for BN(O) visa holders in Wales. We look forward to your response and hope for a more inclusive and timely policy change.

Confion Gorau

Melody Lin