



Tsvetomir Stefanov: How ESOL English helped him into further study

Tsvetomir Stefanov and his family arrived in Scotland from Bulgaria when he was 14. Tsvetomir, who prefers to be called Mir, started Harris Academy in S3. When he first arrived he missed his friends and was very unhappy. He did not possess much understanding of the English language and did not know what people around him were talking about. He could manage simple short transactions in shops but could not enter into any conversations. At first it was difficult to make friends. At the time there were no other fellow Bulgarians for Mir to meet and socialise with so life was very difficult.

Starting to study English at school with SQA ESOL

Mir attended extra English classes in S3 and in S4 started studying an SQA ESOL Unit with his EAL teacher to improve his English. The ESOL class took place once a week after school and was attended by Mir and another pupil who had arrived in Scotland from China. During the classes Mir was given the opportunity to practice reading, writing, listening and speaking English as he worked towards each of his assessments. Mir felt that he spoke English with a very strong accent and that the classes particularly helped him to improve his pronunciation.

Gradually his confidence improved, not only in English but in other classes, as the ESOL classes gave him the opportunity to learn specialised vocabulary needed for other subjects such as Geography. With his new found confidence Mir was able to make friends and quickly integrated into everyday school life.

Mir comments, "I learned language skills which I could adapt to other subjects. In the Scottish system the Standard Grade English might not be the most suitable for those pupils who come to secondary school in S3 like me. The ESOL courses as an alternative can help you with other subjects."

Moving on to further study

At the end of S4 Mir achieved an ESOL Unit at Higher level and gained a place at Dundee College studying an HNC in Travel and Tourism. He believes that the ESOL course has equipped him with the English language skills required for further study and assessment. His main challenge now is to quickly acquire the background knowledge of Scottish culture, history and geography which are so vital for his studies and which all other students from Scotland have gradually absorbed over time!

Visit www.sqa.org.uk/esol for further information on SQA's range of NQ ESOL Units and Courses.