

Please note: this guidance is designed to be read alongside the [University of Sanctuary Resource Pack](#) and [Sanctuary Award Application form](#).

University of Sanctuary Award - Guidance for completing your application

This document outlines the **minimum criteria** for the award, but we encourage universities to build on these in a way that best reflects their unique situation. This document will also provide some guidance notes, to be read alongside the form, on how to answer the questions in the application.

Every institution will vary in its strengths and context so the approaches taken will not be identical. All applicants should start with endorsing the [City of Sanctuary charter](#) and agreeing to its values and principles with commitment to embed these as appropriate within their own context.

A university can attain an award if they are able to provide evidence that, *at all levels of the university structure*, they have integrated our three core principles:

- **Learn:** learning about what it means to be seeking sanctuary, both in general (for the community in which the university is situated), and specifically (in the context of HE and the campus environment).
- **Embed:** taking positive action to embed concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion within the institution including, but not limited to, the student body, students' union, departments, faculties, senior management, administrative and campus management staff. To take steps to ensure this progress outlasts the current student population.
- **Share:** sharing your vision, achievements, what you have learned, and good practice with other universities, the local community and beyond.

Minimum Criteria for a University of Sanctuary Award

The following minimum criteria must all be evident in your Sanctuary Award application:

- 📌 A public commitment to the City of Sanctuary vision through endorsement of the charter, and signing of the local group pledge where relevant.
- 📌 Offer Sanctuary Scholarships which should be underpinned by the [Article 26 Guiding Principles](#).
- 📌 A commitment to taking steps to minimise the impact that changes in government legislation has for forced migrants on the experience of applying for and attending university.

- † A web page dedicated to the sanctuary initiatives and commitment of the university to a culture of welcome.
- † Support the establishment of a student-led awareness group on campus (such as a [STAR group](#)).
- † A dedicated member of staff/team of staff as a contact point for sanctuary students. This provision should be communicated to the students, be easily accessible and the staff member(s) must be appropriately trained.
- † Create a three-year plan or embed into existing plans how the institution can continue to develop a culture of welcome.
- † Evidence of effective communications that ensure sanctuary scholarships and other opportunities are taken up by people seeking sanctuary. See the Article 26 resource '[Reaching Out to Sanctuary Scholars](#)'.
- † Active engagement with the wider community including people seeking sanctuary and their local City of Sanctuary network or refugee support network if there is one.
- † Active engagement with the national University of Sanctuary stream. This could be through financial/in kind contributions, contributions to the work of the University of Sanctuary national steering group, or email group (see resource section below for a link to join the email group). It's also vital to provide case studies to share good practice with others and help with the development of resources and furthering the movement.

Q: Please provide a summary of how your organisation engages with sanctuary seekers.

In this section, outline the ways you have engaged with people seeking sanctuary. How has your university sought to build relationships with local people seeking sanctuary? Has it formed partnerships with any local support organisations? What about the student body - have those within it who have a background of forced migration been consulted on your initiatives? Is there a mechanism for feedback from them?

Q: Using the 3 principles of the sanctuary award, please reflect on how you have achieved these principles attaching evidence to support your answer.

Here we are looking for evidence of your initiatives, projects, policies and progress. Even if something is ongoing, include it as it helps to build a picture of how the university is developing.

Try to be concise but don't assume that the recognition team will have knowledge of your university (so please explain all acronyms and give context where necessary). See the Resource Pack for more detail on what is required for each of the key areas - **Learn, Embed, Share**.

Q: Please identify how sanctuary seekers have been involved in helping you achieve these principles

All applications for a Sanctuary Award are expected to involve people seeking sanctuary, refugees and migrants, in the planning, delivery and/or evaluation of activities for each of the principles, where appropriate.

Building on the examples you have given, identify the ways in which people seeking sanctuary have contributed to these successes. For instance, have you learnt from them directly as 'experts by experience'? Does the university take note of feedback from sanctuary scholars and adapt accordingly?

And, importantly, has the university ensured that there are mechanisms for critical feedback, particularly from people seeking sanctuary; which enable them to be honest, anonymous and confident that there will be no implications for their own funding.

Q: How does your organisation intend to build on your achievements over the next 3 years in order that your award is renewed?

We want to acknowledge and celebrate institutions which show a commitment to the principles in the long-term and which have a forward-looking approach; receipt of the sanctuary award is just the beginning! Every institution will need to re-apply after 3 years to retain its award and ensure a lasting commitment. So, use this section of the application form as an opportunity to share information about your strategic planning.

Has your university demonstrated a sustainable commitment to improving access to education in the foreseeable future? How will it reevaluate and adapt to improve the experience for people seeking sanctuary? What happens when the current cohort of students has moved on, how will the university ensure the engagement continues? What evidence is there that this commitment will continue after the award is granted? For example, is it embedded in the university's mission statement, strategic plan, policies and procedures?

Additional points to include where relevant:

Evidence of self-evaluation

Do students, staff and others involved feel that the university has met the principles? How do you know?

Feedback from others involved

Has feedback from the local community, prospective students or the refugee & migrant support sector been taken into account? Have there been any changes or actions arising from the activities?

Feedback from refugee/migrant involvement

It is always useful to include quotes or comments from an asylum seeker, refugee or other migrant who has engaged with any aspect of the university's endeavours.