

Sanctuary Award Application Form Guidance Notes

Background information

People seeking sanctuary, whether they are separated from or living with their families, are some of the most vulnerable people in the UK (we use the term 'sanctuary' rather than 'asylum' to avoid the negative connotations of phrases such as 'asylum-seekers').

The University of Chester works to enable people seeking sanctuary to progress to higher education. Successful applicants for the Sanctuary Award at the University of Chester will be provided with:

- Tuition Fee Support: Successful students will be offered a tuition fee-remitted place at university until such time as they are awarded status that entitles them to access student finance.
- Up to £2,500 per year in-kind financial support package to help with essential study costs such as such as laptop/printer, stationery, text books, specialist clothes/equipment etc.
- Personal Support: In addition to fee remission, support will be developed for each student to enable them to identify and overcome barriers to achievement on their degree programme.

The University of Chester will not be able to provide any financial support for accommodation or living costs. Students should only apply if they are able to support these costs themselves during their university course.

Eligibility criteria and the selection process

Before making an application for the Sanctuary Award please ensure that you meet our eligibility criteria as follows:

- Seeking asylum or humanitarian protection in the UK, or the partner/dependant of someone seeking asylum or humanitarian protection; OR
- Someone, or the partner/dependent of someone, who has been granted Discretionary or Limited Leave to Remain (DLR) or some other form of temporary status

AND

- Have a conditional or firm offer from the University of Chester for 2024 entry
- Be attending a school, college or voluntary group which can provide a reference in support of your application
- Be unable to access mainstream funding for higher education i.e. Student Finance
- **Not have a 'no study' immigration bail condition**
- **Live within easy commuting distance of the University of Chester**
- Not require additional support from the University for living expenses or accommodation other than that provided through the Sanctuary Award (i.e. 100% tuition fee waiver AND in-kind financial support package)

Applicants must meet these strict eligibility criteria and be in a position to verify their circumstances in order to apply. Applicants who do not meet the criteria will not be considered for an award.

If you have any questions about whether or not you should apply for an award please contact Sandra Hughes by emailing: hughes.sandra@chester.ac.uk

How to apply

- The student should read the guidance notes fully before completing the application form
- The student must give their application to their supporting Referee and ask them to complete a supporting statement
- All application forms must be signed by the Principal of the school or college or a Senior Manager of the voluntary or community group supporting the student's application.

Completing the application form

There are eight sections to complete in the application form. Please note that the information you provide in the form will be held and processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

The deadline for completing the application form is 24 May 2024.

Section 1: Personal details

- Please complete the personal information section of the form – we need this information to contact you about your application. Please print your details clearly.
- Please ensure that you write your name as you would want to see it on, for example, a certificate, with your first name in one box and your second name in the other. You don't need to include your middle names.

Section 2: Educational details

- Please tell us which college, school or community or voluntary organisation you currently attend and which course or courses you are studying (if appropriate). If you are not currently studying please give details of any qualifications that you hold.
- You are also required to provide details of which course at the University of Chester you have received an offer from- applicants who do not hold an offer from the University of Chester prior to submitting their application will not be shortlisted for the Award.
- Note: any applicant wishing to apply for a course and would welcome support with the application process, please email hughes.sandra@chester.ac.uk for more information.

Section 3: Living and financial circumstances

- Please provide as much information about your current living situation and any financial support that you may be receiving i.e. financial allowances, awards from charities or organisations, friends, family, etc
- Please note that applicants are expected to be living within an easy commute of their campus of study. No more than a one-hour commute is deemed practical.

Section 4: Eligibility for the Sanctuary Scholarship

- Please indicate which category applies to your immigration status. If called for interview proof of your immigration status will need to be provided to the University.

Section 5: Personal Statement

When answering the questions in the personal statement section of the form please consider the following. In making a judgement about your application, the selection panel will base their assessment on:

- Your personal and family circumstances and the barriers that you have faced in continuing your education – with particular reference to your current status in the UK
- Your ambitions for the future, why you have chosen your course of study and how the Sanctuary Award will help you to achieve your ambitions
- Your financial circumstances, including how you have managed financially whilst at college and how you will support yourself at university – the University of Chester cannot support living costs, such as accommodation and food – how will you support these costs whilst at university?
- What additional support will you need whilst at university?

Your application for the Sanctuary Award is completely confidential and the selection panel will only be able to consider information that is given in your answers to the 8 sections. Whilst the selection panel do need some details of personal circumstances we do not need to know about the circumstances that led to you seeking asylum in the UK if you don't wish to provide this information. Your supporting Referee will be asked to give a supporting statement about you but if there is any information that you feel should be considered you must include it here.

Section 6: Details of referee

The Referee's Supporting Statement is an important part of the selection process. Please be sure to include all of the requested information and any other information that you believe should be taken into consideration by the selection panel. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide their referee with a copy of their personal statement.

When completing the referee's supporting statement please consider the following:

- The referee providing the supporting statement must provide their contact details and confirm that the school, college or community of voluntary group that they represent wishes to support the student's application.
- The student's application will not be accepted without a supporting statement.
- The referee's Supporting Statement should be approximately 500-750 words and should cover the following:
 - What is the applicant's personal and financial circumstances and what barriers have they overcome to continue their education?
 - How well suited is the applicant to the higher education course they plan to take and how realistic are the student's ambitions?
 - What contribution, to your knowledge, has the student made to a) college life and / or b) their community?
 - Is there any other information that you believe is relevant to the student's application?
 - How do you think the student would benefit from the support offered by the University of Chester's Sanctuary Award?

Applications will only be accepted for consideration if they are accompanied by the referee's supporting statement and signature.

Section 7: Applicant's declaration

- Please confirm, by ticking the appropriate box, that you meet the eligibility criteria.
- Please confirm that should your application be successful, you will inform Sandra Hughes (hughes.sandra@chester.ac.uk) immediately if your circumstances change.
- Please look through the items in the checklist carefully and tick to indicate that you have met all these requirements.

Section 8: Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information

- Please complete the equal opportunities monitoring information section of the form – it is important to ensure that we are accessible to all students and we will use this information to monitor whether or not we are reaching a cross section of the student population.

Informing you of the outcome of your application

- Please note that this is a competitive process and not all applications will be successful
- Following initial assessment the University will contact you to let you know whether or not your application will progress to the next stage of the selection process.
- If your application is taken forward, you will be invited to an interview to verify the information you have provided in your application
- If you are successful in being offered a Sanctuary Award you will be informed within two weeks of your interview

For further information on any aspect of completing your application please email: hughes.sandra@chester.ac.uk