



APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

This guidance was developed by Student Action for Refugees (STAR), in partnership with STAR's Equal Access Activists and university staff involved in scholarship programmes. It provides general guidance for Sanctuary Scholarship applications, but please bear in mind that different universities have different requirements. It is important to check the application guidelines for each university you are applying to.

WHAT ARE SANCTUARY SCHOLARSHIPS?

Sanctuary Scholarships are packages of financial support provided by universities to people who face barriers to Higher Education as a result of their immigration status. Sometimes they have different names, such as Article 26 or Equal Access Scholarships - you can see a full list on the STAR website.

These scholarships are administered by individual universities and are varied in terms of:

1. Who can apply

Some scholarships are only open to asylum seekers or to people who are ineligible for student finance. Check the 'Eligibility' column of the STAR Scholarships List and the university website.

2. What is included

Some scholarships only include a fee waiver (you do not pay fees), while others offer a cash bursary. Some scholarships include accommodation or other 'in-kind' support (e.g. vouchers/study materials).

3. The courses covered

Some scholarships are open only to either undergraduate or postgraduate (Master's or PhD) courses, while others exclude certain courses (e.g. Medicine).

4. The application process

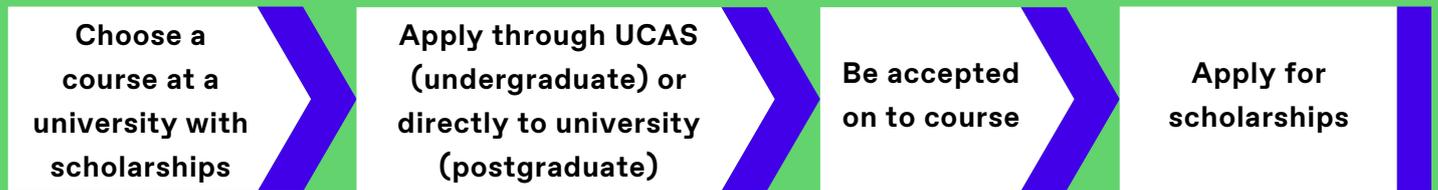
Each university controls its own application process - make sure you check the opening and closing dates, and what the process involves.



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GUIDANCE?
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WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO APPLY?

Most universities require you to have an offer from that university before you apply to a scholarship. For a more detailed step-by-step guide to applying to university, check out [the Access to University section of the STAR website](#).



TOP TIPS FOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

STEP 1: RESEARCH AND PREPARATION

- Research the university and the scholarship that is on offer to make sure that it is the right one for you.
- Attend any information sessions the university offers or read their online resources.
- Before filling in your application, read the application guidance and make sure that you understand all of the steps that you need to follow. Give yourself plenty of time before the deadline in case there are questions that you need to ask or information that you need to gather.
- If you have questions, get in touch with the university you are applying to. Many universities have contact details on their scholarship webpage. This is also a good opportunity to establish a relationship with the university.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER DURING YOUR RESEARCH

DO YOU MEET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP?

Does the style of study (full-time or part-time, online or in-person) suit your lifestyle?

Are the wider activities of the university what you are looking for?

WILL THE SUPPORT ON OFFER BE SUFFICIENT FOR YOU TO COMPLETE YOUR STUDIES?

If you need accommodation, will the scholarship cover this?

Will you have enough funds to cover your living costs?

If you are receiving benefits, Section 95 support or legal aid, seek further advice about whether this may be affected by the scholarship.

IS THE UNIVERSITY A GOOD FIT FOR YOU?

Are you sure you will be able to meet the academic requirements of your chosen course?

STEP 2: WRITING YOUR SUPPORTING STATEMENT

- Most universities ask you to submit a 'supporting statement' or 'personal statement' as part of your application. Some universities ask you to answer a series of questions - each university has its own guidelines and it is important that you read these carefully.
- The supporting statement is your opportunity to tell the university more about your personal, academic, and financial situation and why the scholarship will be valuable to you. It is separate to the personal statement that you will have already submitted when applying to the course - make sure that you don't just copy and paste from your personal statement, because the person assessing your scholarship application will already have access to that.
- Read the questions/guidance carefully and make sure that all of the information you include is relevant. Include specific examples to illustrate your strengths.

TIPS FOR YOUR SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Explain how the scholarship will help you to fulfil your future goals.

Overall, the application is your opportunity to explain why the scholarship will make a difference to you and help you to achieve your goals - both at university and afterwards. Try to show why this scholarship at this university in particular is the best fit for you.

2. Explain barriers that you have faced to continuing your education.

You can take this opportunity to explain the challenges you have overcome, particularly barriers to continuing education. However, do not feel obliged to include anything about your prior experiences that you do not feel comfortable sharing. For example, universities do not expect you to share the detail of why you have claimed asylum.

3. Celebrate your achievements

Share relevant achievements and experience that has helped you to prepare for university study, such as:

- Voluntary experience
- Online or self-directed learning (e.g. additional courses you have attended or books that you have read)
- Ways in which you have engaged with the university (e.g. open days or online events)

4. Show that you are prepared for university

As well as showing that you are prepared for academic study, you may also wish to show an awareness of other challenges you may face at university and how you will manage them, for example costs that the scholarship does not cover (e.g. accommodation, transport) or caring responsibilities.

STEP 3: FINDING A REFERENCE

- If a reference is required for as part of your application, the university will provide guidelines regarding who can act as a referee.
- In general, it needs to be someone who knows you well and is able to comment on your readiness for university study. Ideally, it should be a different referee to the one you submitted for your UCAS / academic application, but if that is not possible then aim to choose someone who knows about your background and how determined you are to succeed in your degree.
- Some universities will specify the length of time that the referee needs to have known you for or the types of roles that are acceptable (e.g. caseworker, educator, lawyer). If you are struggling to name a referee, get in touch with the university to ask for further advice. Some universities will allow referees from abroad.

STEP 4: SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

- Make sure that you know when the deadline is for the scholarship application, and prepare your application well in advance. We add deadlines to the [STAR Scholarships List](#) when they are announced and we put out deadline alerts on Twitter ([@STARnational](#)).
- If possible, ask a friend, teacher or support worker to proofread your application before you submit it.
- Check what the next steps are with the university. Some universities may invite you to an interview.
- Remember that scholarships are competitive. If you are unsuccessful, try not to be disheartened. Ask the university for feedback and, if possible, consider reapplying for scholarships the following year.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- [STAR Scholarships Page](#)
- [Step-by-step guide to applying to university](#)
- [STAR Webinar: Applying for Scholarships](#)
- [Birkbeck Compass Project YouTube Playlist](#)



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