



University of Sanctuary Application Fee

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To outline the fee structure for acquiring 'University of Sanctuary' recognition and set out support that will be provided to universities undergoing the award process.

2. Background

- 2.1. Since 2005, City of Sanctuary UK, (a national umbrella refugee organisation), has supported the development of a network of 'groups' in villages, towns, and cities across the UK to build welcome in their communities for all, but particularly for people fleeing violence and persecution.
- 2.2. In working towards the City of Sanctuary UK vision of welcome, the organisation works with mainstream organisations such as schools, libraries, colleges, universities, arts organisations, faith communities and local authorities to encourage and support them to become recognised places of sanctuary. To do this, a strategic framework for institutional and cultural change is used (known as the 'Sanctuary Award process') which brings together local institutions, local community groups, refugee organisations, and the community members more widely, to ensure that local statutory and non-statutory services are accessible, inclusive, and effective in meeting the needs of people seeking safety in the local community.
- 2.3. The University of Sanctuary network has witnessed unprecedented growth in interest. As of end of 2025 there are 56 awarded Universities of Sanctuary and 10 universities who are actively pursuing Sanctuary Award recognition.
- 2.4. The Network is a collaborative initiative between universities, third sector partners, as well as people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary and is not led by a single organisation. Rather its work driven by a steering group including representatives of the above committed to fair, effective and compassionate approaches to welcoming people within universities.

3. The Award and the need for application fee

3.1. By becoming a member of the Network and [signing the pledge](#) the university is pledging:

- To support the vision that the UK will be a welcoming place of safety for all, and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.
- To endorse the City of Sanctuary Charter (<https://cityofsanctuary.org/2022/02/02/charter/>) and agree to act in accordance with City of Sanctuary values, applying the network principles within its work (as far as the context enables this)
- To recognise the contribution of people seeking sanctuary, welcoming, including and supporting them within the local context.
- To work with local refugee groups and organisations, including City of Sanctuary groups
- [To agree to work towards a University of Sanctuary Award with the aim of becoming a recognised 'University of Sanctuary'](#)

3.2. Thereafter universities are expected to produce an action plan describing how the minimum criteria will be met. These criteria follow the principles of 'Learn, Embed and Share'. Once the plan is developed, (in consultation with local refugee groups and organisations representing them) detailing ongoing and future work, the university can apply to become recognised as 'University of Sanctuary'.

3.3. At the point at which universities are in a position to apply for Sanctuary recognition, they will already have received advice and support to ensure they meet the minimum criteria for recognition, including:

- A wealth of learning opportunities for universities in a fast-moving environment
- Facilitation of collaborative relationships with local and national 3rd sector partners
- Facilitation of inter-universities links and learning opportunities
- Invitation to a bi-annual University of Sanctuary conference
- Access to Applicant Padlet of Resources, Signposting, Case Studies and Advice
- One-to-one support and meetings about auditing and future action planning
- Connections to local third-sector or sanctuary-connected organisations/institutions (where possible) to build collaborative relationships, share insight and pool resources.

3.4. Having access to the above resources and information is key as universities explore, and later prepare to apply for the ‘University of Sanctuary’ award and as such these will remain free to all Universities.

3.5. To continue to support the growth of the Network and provide tailored support for local universities (and groups supporting them) to go through this process, the Network’s steering group made a decision to apply an application fee to all universities at the application stage of Sanctuary Award process.

4. Application Fee Benefits and Structure

4.1. Once Universities feel they have met the minimum criteria there is a need for even more tailored support through the last stages of application. To continue to support this, (as well as build capacity for coordination and support of Universities in initial phases of the award process) an award fee is to be paid either on an annual basis for the duration of the award (3 years), or if preferable in a single payment on application.

4.2. As part of the application fee universities can expect:

- 1-2-1 Advice Sessions as needed
- 1-2-1 pre-application advice
- Coordination of assessment panel
- Post-assessment recommendations
- Amplifying positive messages and showcasing of university work
- Support with communication and messaging around sanctuary issues
- Opportunities to drive the direction and scope of work of the Network

4.3. Fee Structure

Type of HE institution	Fee per annum	Fee for the duration of Award (3 years)
University	£1500	£4500

- 4.4. Though there is great need to build capacity to support the growing network, it is recognised that the fee should never be a barrier to participation. Universities who are not able to pay the fee are encouraged to get in touch to discuss the matter with the University of Sanctuary Programme Manager.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The report provides background to the City of Sanctuary University of Sanctuary Network and the University of Sanctuary Award. It outlines the need to build capacity for coordination following unprecedented interest to ensure the sufficient resourcing to meet demand from current and future members of the network.
- 5.2. An application fee is sought at the final stages of the application process to ensure that tailored support can be provided, and recommendations made to universities aspiring to the recognised as 'Universities of Sanctuary'.