

Refugee Reach: Empowering Higher Education Equality

There needs to be a more **inclusive** and **accessible educational environment** for refugee students at the University of Birmingham. While acknowledging the existing efforts in providing Sanctuary Scholarships (currently, the university offers 5 Sanctuary Scholarships), I would highlight the necessity for an **increased number of scholarships** to accommodate a larger pool of deserving candidates. This would be made possible by the Guild officially becoming pro-Sanctuary and supporting the Equal Access to Education campaign.

The change envisioned involves a comprehensive approach that not only focuses on expanding the scholarship offerings but also prioritizes a holistic support system for refugee scholars. This support system should include an **extensive outreach program** to ensure that potential candidates within the refugee community are fully aware of the scholarship opportunities. Collaborating with local organizations and refugee support networks is crucial to effectively reach and engage with these communities.

Moreover, **simplifying the application process** for the Sanctuary Scholarships is imperative. It is essential to remove any unnecessary barriers and make the application process more accessible and sensitive to the unique circumstances of refugee applicants. By streamlining the process and ensuring that the documentation requirements are reasonable, we can encourage more eligible candidates to apply without feeling overwhelmed or discouraged by administrative complexities.

Enhancing support services, including counselling, language assistance, and academic mentoring, is vital to foster a more inclusive and nurturing educational environment for scholarship recipients. These services should be readily available and tailored to the diverse needs of the scholars, ensuring that they receive comprehensive support throughout their academic journey.

The change advocated for is a more robust and comprehensive approach to support refugee scholars at the University of Birmingham. This includes an increase in the number of Sanctuary Scholarships, an extensive outreach program, a simplified application process, and enhanced support services. By implementing these measures, we can create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment that empowers refugee students to thrive and succeed.

Policy: What stance would you like to commit the Guild to and how would you like to see the Guild enact this?

Our proposal is threefold:

- **For the Student's Guild to endorse the Equal Access Campaign** to support student campaigning, and lobby internally, for the university to increase the Sanctuary Scholarships. The Guild should support STAR Open Days.
- **Awareness and Outreach:** The Guild should implement an extensive outreach program to raise awareness about scholarship opportunities among potential candidates within the

refugee community, collaborating with local organizations and refugee support networks. The Guild should lobby the university to communicate about the scholarships application on their social media channels

- **Support Services:** Enhance support services, including counselling, language assistance, and academic mentoring, to promote a more inclusive and nurturing educational environment for scholarship recipients. The Guild should provide specific training for Guild Advice and get the Guild healthcare & well-being pages translated into different languages.

Implementation Strategy:

Formation of a task force within the Guild of Students dedicated to lobbying the university to increase the number of Birmingham Sanctuary Scholarships, comprising representatives from the university administration, student body, and relevant community organizations.