Reaching Out to Sanctuary Scholars

Introduction
The aim of ‘Reaching out to Sanctuary Scholars’ is to support universities in the development of effective communication and promotion strategies for their Sanctuary Scholarship schemes. We recommend that every university utilise the advice in ‘Reaching out to Sanctuary Scholars’, also refer to the other resources in this series, in particular ‘Guiding Principles on Sanctuary Scholars in UK Higher Education’ and ‘Identifying Sanctuary Scholars’. This resource is intended as guidance and the suggestions within do not represent an exhaustive list, but serve as a point of reference and the basis upon which strategic discussions can take place within the institution.

Key themes to consider include:
1. Access & Participation Plans (Office for Students)
2. Communication
3. Outreach activities
4. Media
5. Point of Contact

Communicating and promoting Sanctuary Scholarships is presented as a three tier process: (i) Internal Promotion – university, (ii) Local Promotion – local/ regional area and (iii) National Promotion. Activities that promote the scholarship scheme and the recruitment of students, in the context of the five identified themes, are not to be confined to a level but can cross all three levels. The primary aim is to explore communication and promotional activities for Sanctuary Scholarships that connect the institution to the local area and national platforms.

We have drawn on (some) examples of best practice that we have documented amongst our partner universities, presented here as short case studies outlining the development and efficacy of specific activities.

University of Bristol

Media
In the first year of the scholarship scheme led by the University of Bristol, the institution embarked on a very successful promotional campaign. Whilst integrated through a big social media push, the campaign involved the Sanctuary Scholarships receiving coverage from local TV and radio stations:

- The University central communications team made an announcement on the University Social Media account, which was then picked up and retweeted by many interested groups and organisations. This also included targeted tweeting of local MPs and councilors.
- Members of the Sanctuary Scholarships Working Group made contact with the Migrant Rights Network, Article 26 project, STAAR, Chinese UK members, South West Law, Migrant Legal Project, City of Bristol College, Bristol Red Cross, Refugee Women of Bristol, The Law Centre, B-Friend and Welsh Refugee Council.
- A local newspaper the ‘Bristol Post’ promoted the scholarships in their news feed.
- The Public Relations Officer in the communication team was contacted by a local radio station, which resulted in a pre-recorded radio interview about the Sanctuary Scholarship Scheme.
- Communication with a diverse range and large number of different groups and organisations ensured that information about the Sanctuary Scholarships spread quickly, either via websites or social media accounts.

University of Winchester

Outreach Activities
The University of Winchester has developed an on-campus residential for forced migrants aged between 14 and 20. The residential is targeted at those who arrived as unaccompanied minors, although those who met other criteria outlined in the Access Agreement: first in family to access university, low income, BME, low level qualifications, history of interrupted education and their status as mature students.

1. Internal Promotion
- Widening participation workshops and support sessions

Outreach team include information about Sanctuary Scholarships, as a dedicated feature in every presentation they deliver in and the Student Recruitment Outreach Newsletter. This is disseminated to every local school, college and provider of further education opportunities.

2. Local Promotion
- Local newspaper: article26.hkf.org.uk
- Local radio station: article26@hkf.org.uk
- Local TV and radio stations:

Keele University

Communication
Keele University has developed close relationships with other University departments, in particular Admissions, Compliance, Recruitment and Outreach to ensure communication about the Sanctuary Scholarships are embedded in current processes through following a series of simple, yet effective steps:

- The delivery of training and regular updates to Admissions and Compliance team, to make sure they are aware of the latest information about the scholarship scheme and that they refer potential applicants to our dedicated point of contact for advice and support.
- Incorporation of a flag on our Student Records database so that we can identify applicants whose immigration status may mean they do not have access to student finance. The dedicated point of contact gets in touch to determine their eligibility, and if appropriate, promote and raise awareness of the Sanction Scholarships.
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University of Birkbeck

Point of Contact
When Birkbeck University developed the concept of the Compass Project (scholarships for forced migrants), it was done so in the knowledge that Birkbeck needed to be proactive in reaching out to potential applicants within the community. The project was created with the input of the widening participation team, who suggested a series of ways in which Birkbeck could engage with forced migrants.

In 2017/18 it was agreed that in order for forced migrants to be welcomed within the work delivered by the widening participation team, they would include, as a distinct group in Birkbeck’s Access Agreement. This was in part to allow disabled students to keep their immigration status, the scholarships were targeted at applicants who met other criteria outlined in the Access Agreement: first in family to access university, low income, BME, low level qualifications, history of interrupted education and their status as mature students.

This approach had multiple benefits, but most importantly, it meant a whole college commitment and approach to improving access for forced migrant students (which was in line with the interests of this group, which ensured that the team included their needs when developing generic widening participation work.

Birkbeck was able to ensure that there was a dedicated point of contact focused on building relationships with the forced migrant community, so as well as making colleagues, internal to the institution aware of the challenges faced by forced migrants in accessing higher education.

The prioritisation of forced migrants by the widening participation team, as a group to focus and report (DFE) on, has resulted in systems being put in place across different Birkbeck schools and departments, which recognise and act on the needs of forced migrants.

University of Keele

Point of Contact
The University of Keele has established an Office for Students and a dedicated point of contact for students within the outreach and participation team. The project was created with the input of the outreach and participation team, who recognised the needs of forced migrants and are embedded in current processes through following a series of simple, yet effective steps:

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Reaching Out to Sanctuary Scholars

Your plans
Use the space below to write in your notes and draw connections to the three tiers of promotion.

1. Access & Participation Plans (Office for Students)

2. Communication

3. Outreach Activities

4. Media

5. Point of Contact