

BIRKBECK SANCTUARY SCHOLARSHIP HANDBOOK 2020

**The Compass Project
Access and Engagement Department**

LONDON'S EVENING UNIVERSITY



BIRKBECK, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Birkbeck is a world-class research and teaching institution, a vibrant centre of academic excellence and London's only specialist provider of evening higher education – which means students can balance studying with work, family and other commitments.

BIRKBECK'S SANCTUARY SCHOLARSHIPS 2020-21

This handbook is a guide for prospective students who wish to study at Birkbeck with support of the Compass Project, Sanctuary Scholarship.

'Sanctuary Scholarship' is a term given to scholarship places within universities, that promote and encourage applicants from students of a forced migrant background, through providing financial help towards to cost of university.

Here are some useful resources to find out more about the sanctuary movement in Universities:

- [Universities of Sanctuary](#)
- [Student Action for Refugees](#)

Before applying for a Sanctuary Scholarship at Birkbeck you must have applied for a place on a taught programme. For information on applying to study at Birkbeck see [here](#).

WHAT IS THE COMPASS PROJECT SANCTUARY SCHOLARSHIP?

Birkbeck's Sanctuary Scholarships are part of the Compass Project. The Compass Project provides 20 students from a forced migrant background, who are not eligible for student finance, with a sanctuary scholarship to study a university-level programme at Birkbeck.

Birkbeck is committed to supporting those who have taken a less traditional route into higher education. The Compass Project is focused on helping those who may face difficulty in

accessing other educational opportunities due to lack of previous academic documentation, or for those who have been out of education for a long period of time.

The qualification gained through receipt of the Compass Project Scholarship may then be used for further study or work.

Successful applicants will receive:

- a **full tuition fee waiver** for relevant courses up to **120 credits** (equivalent to one year of full-time study on undergraduate programmes) or **180 credits** for Masters programmes.
- additional financial support to cover costs such as **transport, childcare and books**

THE SCHOLARSHIPS



HOW MANY SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE?

Birkbeck sponsors 20 students a year under the Sanctuary Scholarship Programme. Students may apply for funding for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. It is a competitive scholarship and we do receive more applications than available places. It is important therefore to read the guidelines carefully and attend the Compass Project Taster Day (more information below!)

WHAT DOES THE SCHOLARSHIP INCLUDE?

TUITION FEES

Successful applicants will be given a tuition fee waiver for an appropriate course up to 120 credits. This typically covers one year of a full-time programme.

If you are a successful applicant to a Master's programme, you will also have the opportunity to complete an additional 60 credits for the dissertation.

BURSARY

Successful applicants to the scholarship will receive a £3000 bursary to cover the cost of travel to classes, books and other study materials.

The bursary is paid in instalments of £1000 per-term for students enrolled on full-time programmes. Students who receive NASS support will be offered the bursary in vouchers.

ONE TO ONE SUPPORT

Successful applicants will also receive additional support around navigating university such as an orientation event and meetings with our wellbeing team. Every student is also paired with an academic mentor who is their dedicated point of contact within their department. Students are also invited to attend a variety of workshops throughout the year.

WHAT COURSE CAN I STUDY?

We typically offer scholarships for the following types of degree programmes:

- [Certificate of Higher Education](#) (120 credits)
- [Foundation Year](#) (120 credits)
- [1st year of an Undergraduate programme](#) (120 credits)
- Postgraduate Diploma (60-120 credits)
- [Master's programme](#) (180 credits)

Please note that we award scholarships for 3 Master's programmes every year.

Degree programmes will start in October. We cannot support applicants intending to start a January degree programme. Similarly, we do not support applicants to shared programmes with other institutions.

If you are unsure what programme you would like to study, we encourage you to attend an [Open Day](#) and look into the courses available on the Birkbeck [website](#).

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

If you are unsure as to whether you meet the eligibility criteria or if anything requires clarification, please contact us.

ELIGIBILITY

The Compass Project offers opportunities to those asylum seekers or forced migrants who would not otherwise be able to access university level education elsewhere. As a result we prioritise applicants who meet the following criteria:

- Those who have **not** previously studied a degree at a UK institution.
- Those who have been out of formal education (including secondary education) for more than 5 years.

IMMIGRATION STATUS

You must meet **one** of the following criteria

1. Asylum Seeker

You have made a claim for asylum in the UK and not yet had a decision (asylum seekers).

Or you are currently appealing an asylum decision and can provide evidence that you have made a fresh claim.

Or you have made a claim under Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights and not yet had a decision.

2. Discretionary/limited leave to remain

You have been granted temporary status as a result of an asylum claim or an Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights claim.

You will need to provide copies of documentation to confirm your immigration status in the UK. This could include any of the following:

- Application Registration Card (ARC)
- Home Office Letter

- Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

If you have refugee status you are not eligible for the Sanctuary Scholarship as you are eligible for Student Finance. Find out more about what you are entitled to [here](#).

If you have Humanitarian Protection you may be entitled to financial support. Please check this online via the UKISA website before applying.

OTHER

In addition to the above, you must also meet all of the following criteria:

- You must be resident in the UK.
- You must not be eligible to receive Student Finance ([find out more about eligibility requirements for student finance here](#)).
- You have applied to and been offered a place on a Birkbeck Programme.
- As we are unable to offer accommodation, you will need to already be living within a commutable distance of central London.

HOW DO I APPLY?

If you are eligible to apply for the scholarship, please ensure that you have read the following guidelines on how to **submit a full application**. If you do not complete all necessary steps by the deadline, your application will not be considered.

Please note that you MUST have applied to your course at Birkbeck BEFORE applying to the Compass Project!

STEP ONE: DISCOVER BIRKBECK

Before applying for the Scholarship, it is important that you have had the opportunity to get to know Birkbeck as well as exploring which course is right for you.

Usually you would be invited to attend our Compass Taster Day in the Spring. As we have had to postpone them this year, we are inviting you instead to speak to a Compass Advisor at telephone clinics that are being held throughout April and May.

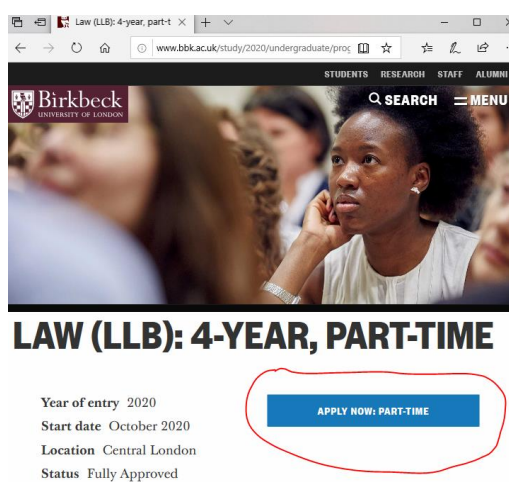
To schedule a meeting with a Compass Adviser, please email: thecompassproject@bbk.ac.uk

SET TWO: APPLY FOR YOUR COURSE

When you are ready to apply to your course, you may make an application online. Many of our student's study part time. If you wish to study part time or at postgraduate level please take the following steps:

1. Apply via the 'apply here' button on the course page
2. Complete the application form including the personal statement

See further details about how to apply to a course [here](#).



If you are applying to a course that has open access modular enrolment, you must still open a 'my Birkbeck account' and send a confirmation to the Compass Coordinator by emailing thecompassproject@bbk.ac.uk.

If you wish to study a full-time undergraduate programme, please contact the Compass Coordinator by emailing thecompassproject@bbk.ac.uk.

Consider using Birkbeck's '[Personal Statement Checker](#)' or attending one of Access and Engagement's '[Get Started](#)' events for further advice on applying to university.

STEP THREE:

Once you have completed the previous steps, you can apply for the Compass Project Sanctuary Scholarship. You will need to:

1. **Select a Referee**
2. **Complete an online application form for the Compass Project**
3. **Send proof of your immigration status**

1. SELECTING A REFEREE

You will need to provide a reference from someone who knows you and who is able to comment on your suitability for study. Examples of possible referees are educators (e.g. school teachers, ESOL instructors, college instructors), lawyers, social workers, NGO workers, or local authority officers.

Please make sure that you have asked the permission of your referee before submitting their details on your application form. We require:

- Full Name
- Name of the organisation they work for and the address
- Role in the organisation
- Telephone number
- Email Address

We will contact your referee after applications have closed on 31st May. They will have 5 working days to submit their reference.

2. COMPLETE THE ONLINE APPLICATION FORM FOR THE COMPASS PROJECT

The online application form for the Compass Project is divided into a number of sections including:

- Personal Information
- Educational History
- Intended course details
- Immigration status + funding eligibility
- Referee details
- Supporting information (series of 5 questions that focus on your reasons for study and applying to the scholarship)

You can download a PDF version of the [application form here](#) to look at in advance of submitting your application. We encourage you to do this, as applications cannot be saved mid-way. **Please only start your application once you are ready and have all the information that you need.**

We also encourage you to have prepared the answers to questions on page 9 of the application on a word document, then copy them into the application when you are ready to submit. To download the questions on a word document see [here](#).

Once started the application should take around 20 minutes to complete.

3. SEND PROOF OF YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS

We need to see evidence of your immigration status upon application. Please ensure that you have sent through these details by 31st May.

You must email a scanned copy of the relevant documents from the list below to thecompassproject@bbk.ac.uk

- Application Registration Card (ARC)
- Biometric Residency Permit (BRP)
- Home Office Letter

We will confirm receipt of these documents via email.

Please be aware that we may ask you for further information or evidence to clarify your status after you have submitted your application.

WHEN CAN I APPLY?

- Applications will open on 1st April 2020.
- The deadline for applying is Sunday 31st May 2020

You must have applied to both the course AND the scholarship by this date.
We will not accept applications submitted after this date.

Please follow this link to complete the application form for the Compass Project:
<https://bbk.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/compass-project-application>

FAQ'S

I have a first degree from a UK/EU institution, am I eligible to apply?

Although you are welcome to apply, preference will be given to those who have not previously had an opportunity to pursue a degree in the UK.

I have refugee status, can I apply for the scholarship?

Scholarships are reserved for students who are not eligible for Student Finance and as a refugee, you would be able to apply for a student loan to pay for your studies. If you are interested in studying at Birkbeck there is still lots of support available. We would encourage you to attend one of our workshops [here](#) or get in touch directly at thecompassproject@bbk.ac.uk.

How many applications do you receive?

The Scholarship is competitive and attracts many applications every year. In 2019, 90 people applied for the scholarship.

I live outside of London, can I still apply?

Applicants living outside of London are welcome to apply. You will be asked to plan for managing working and commuting to London for your classes. This is to ensure that students can travel safely and confidently from home to lectures.

What is a referee?

A referee is someone who knows you well and who can testify to your character. A reference is often required when applying to work or study.

I did not get onto my chosen course, what should I do?

Please contact the Compass Coordinator on thecompassproject@bbk.ac.uk to discuss further.

What if my status changes whilst I am on the course?

Once enrolled, if you are granted refugee or a similar status, you can continue your programme as usual for the rest of the academic year and will not have to pay back any fees. We ask that all scholarship receivers notify us if their status changes whilst studying with Birkbeck.

Can I receive the scholarship if I study part time?

Yes, but how you receive the funding will be slightly different. This will be explained to you if you receive the scholarship.

Is childcare support available?

Yes, please see [here](#).

Am I entitled to any other bursaries whilst on this scholarship?

You will not be entitled to any further bursaries available at Birkbeck. You may however still apply for charitable bursaries or scholarships.

What happens after the scholarship?

Students will be supported to apply for university degree programmes via UCAS or continue with their studies at Birkbeck following completion of 120 credits. One-to-one help will be offered around this in your first term.

