



## NUI Galway University of Sanctuary Scholarship Programme 2020-2021

### Outcome Report

#### Introduction

As part of our University of Sanctuary (UoS) initiative at NUI Galway, the UoS Steering Committee introduced a specific UoS Scholarship Programme for the academic year 2019-2020. Building upon the work of the Inclusive Centenaries and Admissions Office scholarship programmes, the UoS Scholarship Programme is designed to increase participation at NUI Galway for International Protection Applicants, refugees, vulnerable immigrant groups, and Irish Travellers.

For the academic year 2020 the scholarship programme was expanded from 9 scholarships to 12, allocated by the various Colleges at the University.

The breakdown of scholarship distribution was as follows:

#### **College of Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery and Health Sciences**

2 undergraduate and 2 postgraduate scholarships

#### **College of Business, Public Policy and Law**

2 undergraduate and 2 postgraduate scholarships

#### **College of Science and Engineering<sup>1</sup>**

2 or 3 scholarships - Level and amount was determined by demand

#### **College of Arts, Socials Sciences and Celtic Studies**

1 undergraduate and 1 postgraduate scholarship

Scholarships were offered by Colleges of NUI Galway, and therefore were not based upon ethnicity or legal status, or academic pathways to third level. The decision process aligned with NUI Galway's commitment to Athena Swan and gender opportunity for all. The University of Sanctuary steering committee applied a gender rubric for the academic year 2020-2021 where feasible, based upon 40% of either gender for the overall total of scholarships awarded.

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<sup>1</sup> The College of Science & Engineering offered a potential 3<sup>rd</sup> scholarship should all of the scholarships not be filled in the other Colleges. This was due to the fact that there was a total of 12 stipends only.

## Scholarship Application Process & Outcomes

The 2020 UoS Scholarship Programme comprised three stages:

1. Advertising.
2. Application Processing.
3. Recommendations for 2021-2022 by the Scholarship Awarding Panel.

### Stage 1 – Advertising

The UoS Steering Committee advertised the UoS Scholarship Programme through the [www.nuigalway.ie/sanctuary](http://www.nuigalway.ie/sanctuary) webpage, Facebook/Twitter social media platforms, and local/national community partners including the National University of Sanctuary Ireland (UoSI) steering committee, the Irish Refugee Council, the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland (MASI), the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), Pavee Point, the Galway Traveller Movement (GTM), and local news & media. Please see Table 1 below for sources of information on the UoS Scholarship Programme as indicated by scholarship applicants.

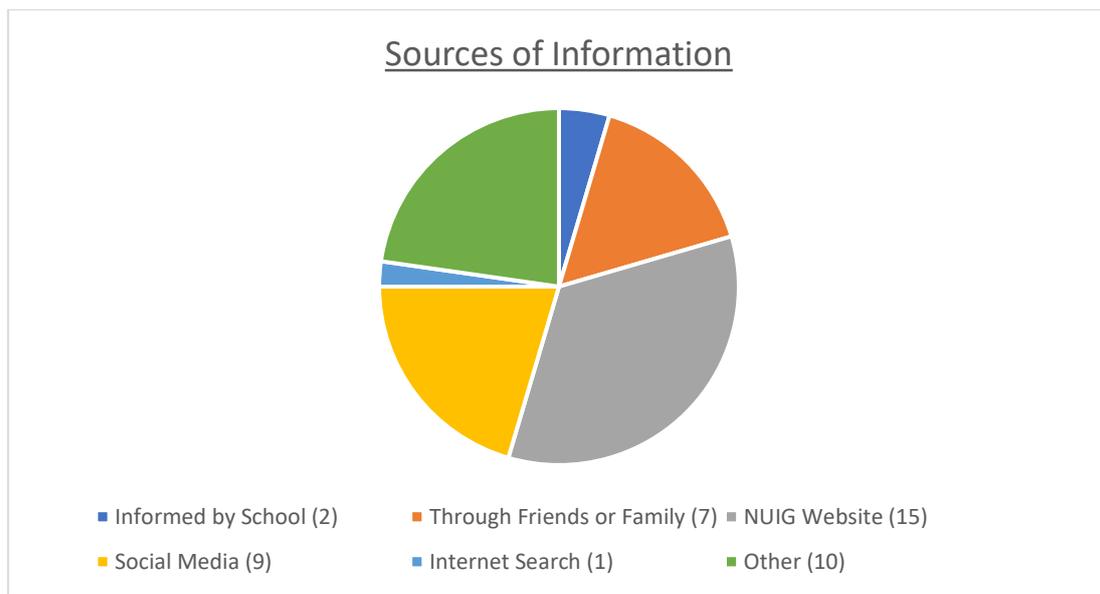


Table 1. Sources of Information indicated by applicants on UoS Scholarship Programme.

## Stage 2 Application Processing

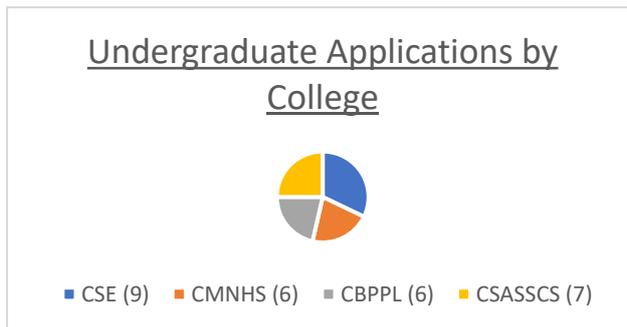


Table 2. Undergraduate Applications by College.

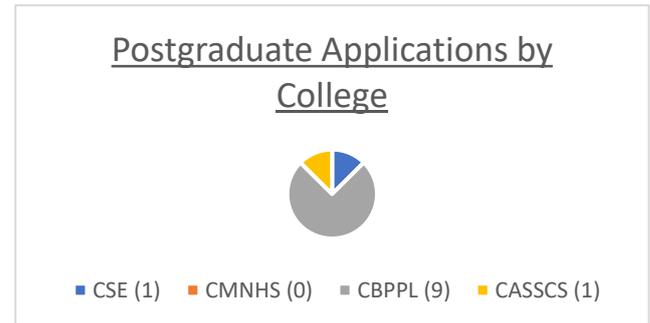


Table 3. Postgraduate Applications by College.

In total, 28 undergraduate & 11 postgraduate applications were received. Please see Tables 2 & 3 for breakdown of applications by Colleges within NUI Galway.

Preference was given to applicants living within the Border, Midlands, Western (BMW) region, as there are no transport supports associated with the UoS Scholarship Programme.

Preference was given to people who have not had the opportunity to study at or complete third-level education.

All applicants had to meet the SUSI Total Family Income threshold.

## Evaluation of Applications

### Undergraduate Rubric

Scholarships were offered to candidates with the highest Assessment Points. Please see Table 4 for undergraduate grading rubric.

| <u>Leaving Certificate*</u><br><u>(Points)</u> | <u>FETAC/QQI PLC*</u><br><u>(Distinctions)</u> | <u>Access Diploma in</u><br><u>Foundation Studies*</u><br><u>(Percentile)</u> | <u>Assessment Points</u> |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|
| 550-625  | 8  | 90-100  | 10                       |
| 500-549  | 7  | 80-89   | 9                        |
| 450-499  | 6  | 70-79   | 8                        |
| 400-449  | 5  | 60-69   | 7                        |
| 350-399  | N/A  | 50-59   | 6                        |
| 300-349  | N/A  | 40-49   | 5                        |

Table 4. Grading Rubric for Undergraduate Applications.

\* Where two applicants had the same number of Assessment Points, the higher percentile/points (where applicable) were awarded the scholarship. If there was a further tie in Assessment Points (e.g. between FETAC PLC and FETAC PLC; or between FETAC PLC & Leaving Certificate), then random selection was to be utilised as the determining factor.

## Postgraduate Assessment

Postgraduate assessment were based upon the highest average of undergraduate level 7, level 8 or level 9 results (some applicants may have studied at various levels of undergraduate). Where there was a tie, then random selection was to be the determining factor. Again, preference was given to applicants who had not had the opportunity to study at the level at which they were applying.

For applicants with qualifications from countries outside of Ireland, NUI Galway International Office Equivalent Grading by Country can be found here:

<http://www.nuigalway.ie/international-students/country.html>

## **Scholarship Awards**

Of the initial applicants, 28 undergraduate & 11 postgraduate applications were received, and there was a 50/50 gender breakdown amongst initial applicants.

The breakdown of awarded scholarships by College comprises:

### **College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies**

1 x undergraduate & 1 x postgraduate awarded

### **College of Business Public Policy & Law**

2 x undergraduates & 2 x postgraduates awarded

### **College of Science & Engineering**

3 x undergraduates awarded

### **College of Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery, & Health Sciences**

1 undergraduate awarded

A total of 10 from 12 scholarships were awarded, and the breakdown comprises 7 undergraduate & 3 postgraduates. The gender breakdown of awardees was 50:50

The ethnic breakdown of awardees comprised 1 Irish Traveller & 9 international protection applicants

### **Stage 3 Recommendations from the Awarding Panel for 2021-2022**

The awarding panel for the 2020 -2021 UoS Scholarship Programme comprised Dr Anne Byrne, Dr Ciara Smyth (Chair), and Dr Daniel Savery

The University of Sanctuary awarding panel recommendations for the 2021-2022 academic year:

1. We were told we can award 13 scholarships across the University but in actual fact we can only allocate 10, representing a net loss of three scholarships. This is because although the CMNMHS has made 2 U/G and 2 P/G scholarships available, there was only one applicant to that College. Where this occurs, we recommend that the other Colleges redistribute the outstanding scholarships between them.
2. The devolution of decision-making to the College level about how many scholarships to fund has led to disparities between Colleges (the CASSCS is particularly disappointing in this regard with only 1 U/G and 1 P/G scholarship). We strongly recommend that all Colleges fund a minimum number of scholarships (e.g. 4 scholarships annually), which they can exceed if they wish. This would also be consistent with the Strategic Plan and with the University of Sanctuary designation.
3. Notwithstanding the financial straits in which some Colleges find themselves we surmise that not all Colleges may be aware of the rationale for the University of Sanctuary Scholarships or the impact they have on scholars' lives. In order that College Executives are fully aware of the rationale and impact of the scholarship we recommend that a UoS Scholar from each College make a presentation at the relevant Executive meeting on how the scholarship has affected his/her life. We further recommend that it be a condition of the scholarship that scholars may be called on to do promotional and other work on behalf of the University of Sanctuary.
4. The designation of the level of the scholarship by some colleges (e.g. 1 U/G and 1 P/G in the CASSCS) has stymied the discretion of the board to allocate scholarships according to where they can contribute most to facilitating access to NUI Galway. We recommend that it should be left to the board to decide whether these scholarships are allocated to the U/G or P/G level.
5. Undergraduate applications: This year we were asked simply to rank order the applicants on the basis of academic merit, based on a marking rubric that translated Leaving Certificate points, FETAC/QQI points and Access Diploma results into common assessment points. In previous years (both as the UoS Scholarship Board and the Inclusive Centenaries Scholarship Board) we received a personal statement and interviewed all shortlisted candidates. This gives a much fuller picture, not only of the academic qualities of the applicant, but of their motivation and suitability to act as an ambassador for the University of Sanctuary scholarship. A combination of academic merit, personal statement and interview is the best practice approach, as evidenced e.g. by the Hardiman scholarship process. We recommend that the process revert to

that of previous years. If our recommendation is not adopted and if decisions are to be made purely on points, then there is no need for an academic assessment panel.

6. Postgraduate applications: We were provided with undergraduate qualifications from a cross-section of countries, with no table of equivalences. Only some of the countries are catered for on the International Office's entry requirements for non-EU countries. We recommend that an equivalent mark be provided for all P/G applicants.
7. If rank ordering is utilised, in the event of a numerically identical result among a group of applicants, all other qualifying conditions being equal, we recommend that a process of random selection using a computational random number generator and selection system be adopted.