

SSSI RESOURCE · PLANNING

The Pre-Departure Budget Worksheet

What 'fully funded' actually covers — and what it leaves you to plan for.

What 'fully funded' usually covers

Most fully funded scholarships cover the following. Confirm each with your specific award letter — they vary.

- Tuition fees in full
- Basic on-campus or near-campus accommodation
- Monthly living stipend (USD 800–1,500 in most destination countries)
- Health insurance through the university
- One return economy flight per year
- Initial settlement allowance (one-off, USD 500–1,500)

What 'fully funded' usually does NOT cover

- Visa application and biometrics fees
- Passport renewal or first-time issuance
- Police clearance and medical examination
- IELTS/TOEFL/DET test fees
- University application fees
- Document translation and notarization
- Pre-departure flights to the test or visa interview city
- Winter clothing for European or North American destinations
- Initial deposits (accommodation, phone, bank)
- Books and laptop (some programs cover, most do not)
- Cost of returning home for family emergencies

Typical pre-departure costs — South Sudanese passport holder

Item	Estimated cost (USD)	Notes
Passport (new)	100–150	South Sudan passport, Juba issuance
IELTS test fee	210–250	British Council Juba or Nairobi
University application fees	0–500	Many waive for low-income applicants
Document translation	20–80	Per document; varies by language
Notarization and certification	10–30	Per document
Police clearance	30–80	Required by most visa offices
Medical examination	100–300	Required for UK, Canada, Australia visas
Visa application fee	100–800	Varies by country (UK ≈ £490, USA ≈ \$185, Canada ≈ \$160)
Visa biometrics	55–110	Most countries
Travel to visa interview	100–800	If interview is in Nairobi, Addis, or Kampala
Pre-departure clothing	200–600	Especially for winter destinations
Flight to destination	800–1,800	If not covered, or for excess baggage
Airport tax and excess baggage	100–400	Often overlooked
Accommodation deposit	300–1,000	If renting off-campus
Phone, SIM, opening bank account	100–250	First week on arrival
First month food (before stipend lands)	200–500	Stipends often pay in arrears
Estimated total	2,400–7,600	Depending on destination country

Plan for the higher end. Visa, flight, and clothing costs almost always exceed initial estimates.

Where the money typically comes from

- **Scholarship settlement allowance** — covers part, paid on arrival
- **Family contributions** — be specific about what is realistic
- **Personal savings** — open a dedicated account 12 months before departure
- **Community fundraising** — see SSSI fundraising guide for South Sudanese applicants

- **NGO and refugee-specific support** — UNHCR DAFI top-up grants, Windle Trust, JRS
- **Pre-departure scholarships** — some programs offer separate grants for visa/flight costs

Planning timeline

Timing	Action
6 months before departure	Start dedicated savings account; begin community fundraising
3 months before departure	Apply for passport / renewal if not yet issued
2 months before departure	Book IELTS retake if needed; begin visa application
6 weeks before departure	Visa interview, biometrics, medical exam
3 weeks before departure	Book flight after visa approval
1 week before departure	Withdraw USD cash for first 2 weeks (USD 300–500)

Cost-saving strategies

- Book flights 4–6 weeks before departure, not earlier and not later
- Use student-rate platforms (StudentUniverse, STA Travel) for flight discounts
- Buy winter clothing on arrival rather than in Juba — quality is better, cost is similar
- Pack a 6-month supply of any prescription medication you take regularly
- Open a Wise or Revolut account before departure for cheaper international transfers
- Ask your scholarship coordinator whether the settlement allowance is paid in advance

Worksheet — fill in your own numbers

Item	Your estimate (USD)	Funded by
Passport		
IELTS / TOEFL / DET		
Application fees		
Documents & translation		
Police clearance		

Medical examination		
Visa fee		
Biometrics		
Travel to visa interview		
Pre-departure clothing		
Flight		
Excess baggage		
First-month accommodation		
First-month food		
Phone & banking setup		
TOTAL		