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»» A FREE TOOLKIT

Scholarship Real-Cost *Checklist.*

“Fully funded” does not mean “nothing to pay”. Find out what is covered, what the first weeks really cost, and what the fine print asks of you, before you accept an offer.

What is covered

First-90-days cash flow

Terms and conditions

Accept or decline

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Three surprises hiding behind “fully funded”

Winning a scholarship is a big achievement. These three checks make sure it does not turn into a financial surprise at the visa stage or after you land.

1

There is no single definition

Different scholarships called “fully funded” cover very different things. Check what is in and out before you plan your budget.

2

The money can arrive late

Rent and deposits are due from day one, while the first stipend can come weeks after you land. Plan the gap.

3

It is an agreement, not free money

Return requirements, work limits and renewal conditions can cost you opportunities. Read them before you apply.

How to use this checklist. Use one copy per scholarship you are shortlisting. Fill in the facts from the scholarship's **official page** (not from social media), then work through Parts 1 to 3 and finish with the accept-or-decline check. **The PDF is fillable:** click the boxes to tick them and type into the tables (Adobe Acrobat/Reader, Chrome, Edge or Preview), or print it. If the page does not answer a question, email the scholarship office: guessing can be the most expensive option.

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final check + email template

What does “fully funded” really cover?

Three scholarships that people all call “scholarships” are three very different packages. Examples below come from their official pages, checked in October 2026. Always re-check the current page.

Chevening (UK)

Tuition fees, a monthly living allowance, economy flights, the visa application cost, plus arrival and departure allowances.

Fulbright Pakistan

Tuition, textbooks, airfare, a living stipend, health insurance, visa fees, a computer and a settling-in allowance.

Politecnico di Milano, Silver

A tuition fee waiver only. Living costs, flights, insurance and everything else are yours to cover.

1.1 Is tuition fully covered, or is it partial aid? ☐

If it is partial aid, make sure you can pay the remaining fee and the living costs needed for the visa and your arrival.

1.2 Is the monthly stipend enough for THAT city? ☐

A stipend that is comfortable in one city may not cover the rent in another. Compare the stipend with real rent and living costs, then ask: if I must arrange some money myself, can I?

1.3 Which extras are covered: flights, visa fee, health insurance, application fee? ☐

Write down what is covered and what is not. Do not assume.

1.4 Are you bringing dependents? ☐

Their costs are often separate. Some scholarships ask you to show you can support dependents yourself, and visa rules for dependents differ by country, so check both.

1.5 Email the scholarship office if anything is unclear ☐

If the page does not say, ask in writing. A short email is cheaper than a wrong guess.

Cost table: covered or mine?

Fill this in from the official page for each scholarship. The last column is what you will have to pay yourself.

Item	Covered? (yes / no / partly)	Amount (per month or total)	My cost
Tuition fees			
Monthly living stipend			
Flights (to and from)			
Visa application fee			
Health insurance			
Application fees			
Arrival or settling-in allowance			
Books and computer			
Dependents (if any)			
Other costs			

Scholarship	
My total yearly cost (estimate)	
Can I cover the difference? How?	

REFLECT

If the stipend is not enough for my city, what is my plan, and is it realistic?

The first 90 days: cash flow and buffer

Scholarship money often arrives after you land, but the costs start before that. Some scholarships give an arrival or settling-in allowance for this reason: the first weeks are the most expensive.

BEFORE THE VISA

Proof of funds may be needed

BEFORE LANDING

Flights, insurance, first payments

DAY 1

Rent and deposit are due

WEEKS LATER

First stipend arrives

2.1 Check the embassy's proof-of-funds rule

☐

Many students need to show funds for the visa even with a scholarship. Check the embassy's current requirements for your country and scholarship, before you accept.

2.2 Find out when the first payment arrives

☐

Ask: when is the first stipend paid, how (bank account, card?), and what do I need to receive it? Funds can take time to disburse.

2.3 List the costs that are due before that payment

☐

Deposit, first month's rent, local transport, SIM, food, documents, and anything the scholarship does not pay.

2.4 Keep a safety buffer of 2 to 3 months of expenses

☐

Even if your living costs are covered, a buffer protects you if disbursement is delayed.

2.5 Write the month-0 budget before you accept

☐

One page with every cost until the first stipend. If you cannot cover it, you want to know now.

Month-0 cash flow

Everything you must pay before the first stipend arrives.

Cost before the first stipend	When due	Amount	Paid by (savings / family / scholarship)
Deposit			
First month's rent			
Flights (if not covered)			
Visa and insurance (if not covered)			
Food, transport, SIM, first weeks			
Documents, translations, fees			
Other			

Total I need before the first stipend	
Date the first stipend arrives (ask the office)	
My safety buffer (2 to 3 months of expenses)	
Money I can actually arrange	
Gap, and how I will close it	

Why this matters. If you cannot cover the shortfall and accept the offer anyway, you may have to decline later. That wastes your effort and can take a place from another deserving candidate. Find out early.

The fine print: terms and conditions

A scholarship is an agreement with its own terms. Sometimes you pay not with money but with an opportunity cost. Read the terms before you start the application.

Chevening

Requires you to return to your home country for at least two years after the scholarship ends.

Fulbright Pakistan

Requires you to return within 30 days of finishing the programme and to spend at least two years in your home country.

Your scholarship?

Look for the same kinds of rules in the terms: return, work and renewal. Some also include a bond to repay funds on breach.

3.1 Return requirement ☐

Do you have to go home after the degree, for how long, and by when? If you plan to settle abroad, this can become a very big issue.

3.2 Work restrictions ☐

Can you work during or after the degree? A job that breaks the terms can cost you the scholarship.

3.3 Renewal conditions ☐

If the degree is longer than a year, the scholarship may renew only if you keep up attendance, CGPA or credits.

3.4 Repayment clause ☐

If you breach a term, may you have to pay back what was spent on you? Check the exact wording in the agreement.

3.5 Dependents and visa rules ☐

Some countries allow dependents and some do not. Check the scholarship and the visa rules together.

3.6 Compare the terms with your own plan ☐

Write your plan for the next five years next to the conditions. Any conflict needs a decision now, not later.

Fine-print reader

Condition	What the official terms say (copy the wording)	Does it fit my plan? (yes / no / why)
Return home (how long, by when)		
Work during or after the degree		
Renewal (attendance, CGPA, credits)		
Repayment if I breach		
Dependents		
Other conditions		

Sources I checked (links) and the date	
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REFLECT

Which condition worries me most, and what could I ask the scholarship office about it?

Accept or decline?

Tick every box before you accept an offer.

COSTS

- ☐ I know what is covered and what is not (Part 1 table)
- ☐ I compared the stipend with real costs in that city
- ☐ I wrote my month-0 budget (Part 2 worksheet)
- ☐ I know when the first payment arrives
- ☐ I have a buffer of 2 to 3 months, or a realistic plan for it

TERMS

- ☐ I read the return, work and renewal conditions
- ☐ I understand what happens if I breach them
- ☐ The terms fit my plan for the next five years
- ☐ I checked dependents' costs and visa rules (if relevant)
- ☐ Anything unclear has been asked in writing

EMAIL TO THE SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE (COPY AND ADAPT)

Subject: Question about [scholarship name] funding and conditions

Dear [Scholarship team],

I would like to understand the funding precisely before I [apply / accept]. Could you please confirm: (1) which costs are covered (tuition, monthly stipend, flights, visa fee, health insurance, application fee), (2) when the first payment is made and how, (3) whether dependents are covered, and (4) the return, work and renewal conditions in the agreement?

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,
[Your name]

»» WHAT NEXT

Not sure which scholarship really fits your budget?

Our team can go through the real cost and the conditions with you before you apply or accept. Book a free consultation and bring your shortlist.

Book a free consultation at aptcon.co

More free toolkits and the full Scholarship Roadmap at aptcon.co/resources.html

Sources for the examples (checked October 2026): chevening.org (what a scholarship covers; eligibility), usefp.org (Fulbright Pakistan degree FAQ), polimi.it (scholarships).

This checklist is general guidance, not legal, financial or immigration advice, and it does not guarantee any outcome. Scholarship terms and visa rules change: always confirm on the official websites before you apply or accept.