



Ministry of Higher Education

Departure Booklet



Scholarship Section

2023



MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Republic of Maldives

Departure Booklet

1. Introduction

This Departure Booklet aims to guide the scholarship awardees of the processes and preparations involved prior to departure for their studies abroad.

2. Course and University Recognition and Approval

The Awardee must ensure that the intended programme of study and University that offer the programme is recognized by the Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA) and approved by the respective Licensing Body in the country (such the Maldives Medical and Dental Council, Maldives Civil Aviation Authority etc.).

3. Payments

These scholarships are fully funded by the Government of Maldives. The MoHE on Government's behalf administers these scholarships. The administration of these scholarships is governed by regulations published on MoHE website and Government Gazette. Those regulations explains the expenses covered by the scholarships. It is highly recommended that the Awardees familiarize themselves with the relevant regulations.

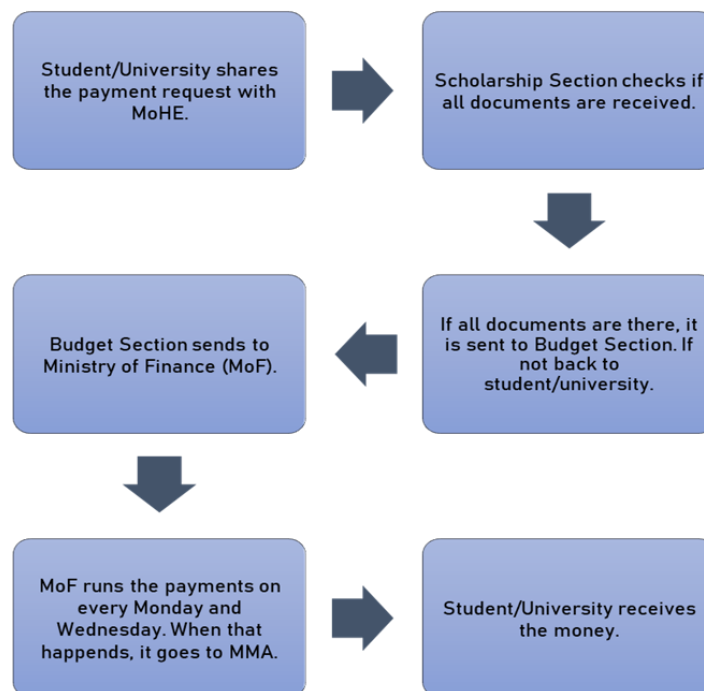
Any Awardee travelling abroad to study is expected to open an account in a Bank in the country where they study as soon as she/he reach there.

To make payments to students abroad, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) requires to create a vendor account for every new student and university. MoF could only create these accounts once they receive students' foreign bank account details from MoHE. Hence, MOHE REQUIRES ACCOUNT INFORMATION WITHOUT DELAY.

Generally, the MoF requires the following information to process payment requests sent by MoHE;

To create a new vendor	For University Invoice payments	For student stipend his/her foreign bank account details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student's Name ▪ ID number ▪ Phone number ▪ Email ▪ Passport copy ▪ ID copy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ University Invoice ▪ University Name ▪ University address (full address) ▪ University postal code ▪ Account name ▪ Account number ▪ Currency ▪ Swift code ▪ Bank Key / Sort Code / Routing No / BSB No ▪ IBAN No / IFSC ▪ Bank Name ▪ Bank Address (full address) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Account name ▪ Account number ▪ Currency ▪ Swift code ▪ Bank Key / Sort Code / Routing No / BSB No ▪ IBAN No / IFSC ▪ Bank Name ▪ Bank Address (full address)

DO NOTE that the students must send ALL DOCUMENTS (these may vary depending on payment request/country) required by MoHE at least 10 working days ahead to process the payments. If any piece of information is missing or wrong in any stage of the payment procedure below, MoHE informs the student/university and then the process starts all over again from the beginning. Also note that a foreign payment takes about 3 to 4 weeks to process.



MMA makes international transactions

4. Country Research if travelling abroad

a. Visa Process

- The Awardee must apply for their visa (if needed) as soon as possible after accepting their placement of a university/institution.
- Any Awardee must ensure that he/she has a passport and visa preferably valid for the whole period their scholarship.
- They must also ensure that they read the information/conditions on the Student Visa and meet various visa requirements.
- Awardees should also note that breaching visa conditions (e.g., working or working more hours than allowed) of a country may result in cancellation of their visa.
- Cancellation of visa may jeopardize the scholarship opportunity.
- Direct flights are operated to a few countries from Maldives. To reach other destinations a transit in another countries (needing a transit visa) may be required.

b. Overseas Student Health Cover/Medical Insurance

- Health services in different countries vary in many ways. Some countries require students to have compulsory health insurance coverage. Some universities include health insurance costs in the university payments while others do not. In any case, it is of utmost importance that the Awardees of these scholarships have their Student Health Cover/Medical Insurance secured as the scholarship covers its costs but does not cover medical costs.
- The Awardees must carefully read and understand their health insurance policy and be aware of what is covered and what is not covered. Many health insurance policies do not cover pre-existing medical conditions and hence will not pay/reimburse costs of treatment of such conditions.

c. Accommodation and Living Expenses

- Finding a suitable accommodation can be one of the biggest challenges a new student may face at the beginning of her/his new journey of studies.
- Some universities/ institutions may provide accommodations in their halls of residences at a subsidized rate on a permanent basis, while others may provide temporary accommodation only for a fixed period of time as the student arrives first time. Other universities/ institutions only provide

guidance on how to find it but do not provide any accommodations.

- In any case, it is advisable that the Awardee of these scholarships make his/her own plans for a permanent place of study for the whole duration of the scholarship.
- Cost of living and availability of rental accommodation differs from country to country and even city to city. The amount of stipend paid by the scholarship to cover living expenses also differs but not necessarily proportional to the actual expenses at a given time. The stipend rates are fixed for different countries/ cities but revised from time to time. The stipend is usually paid on a six-monthly basis once the vendor account is created as mentioned above.

d. Public Transport

- Availability of public transport and its costs vary widely between countries and cities. Transport options in the city/country the Awardee choose to study in needs to be explored.
- Buses and trains and ferries operate according to timetables. Public transport authorities generally have maps available of their routes and the times they operate.
- Public transport in many cities may be the cheapest option but it may not be the safest or fastest. Hence, carefully consider the options before resorting to taking taxis or private car hire as it could be expensive.

e. Culture

- Research about the culture of the destination. There may be culturally acceptable dos and unacceptable don'ts.
- Research about things like safety and security, things of interest to you (hobbies), holidays, nearby traveling options etc.
- Do research about the laws in the destination, what you are allowed to do and what is not.

f. Packing and Travelling

- Airlines have set limits to the number of pieces of luggage and weight a passenger can carry without additional charges. Exploring the conditions of the airline ticket is important.
- Scholarship only pays for a basic airline ticket with usual carryon baggage and checked (20-40 kg) baggage included in the ticket fare. So, in case if an Awardee wish to carry more

numbers/ weight of baggage the Awardee will have bear the costs involved.

- Paying for such 'excess baggage' at the airports' checking counter is often more expensive than pre-purchasing baggage weight. There is the risk of offloading excess baggage unless pre-purchased.
- Some countries have very hard and fast rules on what could be brought in. Hence, it is highly recommended that the Awardees read about and understand customs and immigration regulations of the countries he/ she chooses to travel.
- The passenger is responsible for what is contained in his/her luggage, hence it is important that the Awardee knows well what is packed in their baggage. It is extremely risky to check-in luggage pieces handed by strangers.
- Carrying food items (such as rihaakuru, theului faiy etc.) is restricted to certain countries while others allow them on certain conditions, such as they being properly labelled and securely packed. The customs officers may at their discretion want to see them and hence it may be easy if such items are stored in an easily accessible manner within the suitcase. Commercially prepared/ packed items get through easily.
- The Awardees must ensure that they only travel with items that are allowed to import to the countries they travel.
- Copies of medical prescriptions are required to be accompanied with medicine by certain countries if medicines are carried.
- While travelling on student visa, certain immigration officers may want to see the university/ institutions' placement letter/sponsor letter or any other related documents, hence it is important they are kept handy but secure.
- Having copies of all these important documents (such as airline tickets, boarding pass, passports, placement letters, sponsor letters etc.), digitally stored on the smart phone (if the Awardee has one) or on 'cloud' (if accessible) may also be useful in case if anything is misplaced.
- Passports and other travel documents will have to be in an easily accessible place upon demand but VERY securely guarded. The Awardees must be careful not to handover passports to anyone other than an airline/ custom/ immigration office on duty.
- Carrying clothes appropriate to the season to the Awardee's destination is necessary. Some countries at certain times of

the year have very hot or cold climates requiring people to dress accordingly.

- Items that need to be declared upon arrival may be better if packed separately or at a place easily retrievable from the luggage.

g. Upon Arrival to Destination

- **International to Domestic Travel**
 - Often, the first port of call in a country requires air passengers' luggage to be checked out with passengers, pass through Immigration and Customs. Hence, Awardees are reminded to check and ensure they act accordingly.
 - As there are no international or domestic airports in every city, the Awardee may have to travel from the international airport to another city by plane/ train/ bus or car. In some cases they may have to move from international terminal to domestic terminal in the same airport. In this case the Awardee will normally be required to collect their baggage after passing through the Immigration/ passport check.
 - It is important that the Awardees familiarize with the arrangements and costs of getting to their final destination.
- **Sim Card and Internet**
 - Many international airports have free (or paid) internet on Airport WiFi and kiosks to sell SIM cards.
 - Getting internet access either through the free WiFi or SIM card to let the family and friends know the whereabouts online may be a cheaper option than making a roaming (or normal) telephone call through a telephone booth.
- **Focal Point**
 - Contacting the relevant personnel at the destination (be the Consular, Accommodation Officer or University/ Institution representative) upon arrival is also important. Such a person may be in a position to provide guidance on various matters.
 - In case assistance had to be sought from other sources, making sure of getting it only from a responsible authority rather than from a bystander is important.
- **Currency Exchange**
 - International airports also have currency exchange booths or ATM machines. Not all booths or machines may have

the same rate while some may charge a currency exchange commission.

- In many countries, the currency exchange rates outside the international airports may be favourable and hence it is advised to explore the options and convert foreign currency to (or withdraw local) currency as needed.
- **University/ Institution**
 - Orientation Sessions conducted by University/ Institutions are of great value. Important information about life in academia and facilities available for students are disseminated during those sessions. Hence, Awardees are advised to participate in these sessions.
 - They are also excellent opportunities for building relationships and networks.
 - Such relationships and networks hugely contribute to success in academic life.
 - Links for various useful online (or physical) groups/pages may be gained through orientation sessions.

h. Others

- Ensure your passport and ID card are renewed or have enough dates of validity for your study period.
- Customs and Border regulations may vary from country to country. Hence, it is very important to tell family and friends about the postage process, custom laws, import laws and biosecurity laws applicable to the country in case they may want to sending gift parcels from home.
- It is important that the Awardees keep regular contact with the family and share their experiences often with the family and close friends back at home.
- After the initial excitement settles and you feel sad and lonely, you are not alone. Always remember to get help, talk to your student contact officer and if you don't have one, speak to your department staff so that they will be able to talk to you about your feelings and guide you on actions that will help you feel better.
- You will meet many people who are eager to make friends once you start university life. Don't be shy and take the first step and approach people and strike up a conversation. Meeting diverse people on campus can lead to rewarding friendships and support during your abroad experience as a student.

5. Useful Links

- MQA Recognition form is available from the MQA website, which is at MQA, Downloads, Recognition of the Intended Program.
https://www.mqa.gov.mv/static/uploads/INTENDED_PROGRAMME_NEW_2022-02-28T07-32-11_2023-03-27T08-32-49.pdf
- MoHE Stipend Rates
https://www.mohe.gov.mv/images/resources/resources/MoHE%20Allowance%20Rates_updated_on_18.9.2023.pdf

6. Further Information

For information and queries, please contact Ministry of Higher Education's Scholarship Section either by email schol@mohe.gov.mv or by phone +9603026947.