12-month scholarship application planner

A month-by-month plan from first research to arrival.

The full page on our website
scholarmena.com/resources/templates/application-planner/

Count back from your earliest deadline, not only from your start date. Write the month your programme starts: _____ and the earliest application deadline on your list: _____

Month 1 is 12 months before the start. Write the real month next to each month below. Applications go in during Months 6 and 7: if your earliest deadline falls before Month 6, move every task before it earlier so the application is ready in time.

Example: for a September 2027 start, Month 6 is February 2027. If your earliest deadline is in December 2026, the Month 6 and 7 tasks are due before December 2026, not in February.

This planner is generic. Every programme and scholarship sets its own dates: read them on the official page and move the tasks to fit.

Month 1 · 12 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Choose your field, degree and countries. List 8-12 programmes and scholarships, and read each official page for the deadline, eligibility and documents.

Notes: Before you choose, check how your home country recognises degrees from abroad. Your ministry may look at the university's accreditation and the mode of study; Oman's Ministry of Education, for example, recognises online study only for master's and doctoral degrees from listed universities. If an employer or government sponsors you, read the sponsor's rules first.

☐ Done

Month 2 · 11 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Shortlist 4-6 applications. Check each eligibility rule: nationality, grades, English score, work experience. Book your English test.

Notes: IELTS on computer usually gives results in 1-2 days; on paper, up to 13 days. TOEFL iBT scores arrive 3 days after the test. Our advice: book a date that leaves time for one retake before your first deadline.

☐ Done

Month 3 · 10 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Prepare for the English test. Ask your university for official transcripts and the degree certificate, or an expected-graduation letter. Start your academic CV.

Notes: Ask the registrar how long certified copies and stamps take, and write the dates down. Check your passport's expiry date against the visa rules of each country on your list.

☐ Done

Month 4 · 9 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Take the English test. Draft your statement of purpose or motivation letter. PhD applicants: read supervisors' recent papers and email those whose work fits yours.

Notes: If a programme asks for attested copies, start now: attestation can pass through several offices in turn. For a UAE university, for example: the issuing university, a notary, the foreign ministry of the country of study, the UAE embassy, then the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

☐ Done

Month 5 · 8 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Ask your referees (use the reference request emails). Finish the second draft of each statement. Prepare the research proposal or portfolio if the programme asks for one.

Notes: If a document is not in English or in the programme's language, order certified translations now.

☐ Done

Month 6 · 7 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Open an account on each portal. Upload documents and fill in the forms. Submit the applications that close first.

Notes: Portals give the deadline in their own time zone. Convert each one to your time once and write it down.

☐ Done

Month 7 · 6 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Submit the remaining applications. Remind referees about one week before each deadline. Check each portal for missing items.

Notes: Keep PDF scans of your passport, national ID and any sponsor or employer letter ready to upload.

☐ Done

Month 8 · 5 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Prepare for interviews: your statement, your research plan, why this country. Practise your answers aloud.

Notes: Online interviews may be set in another time zone. Confirm the time in your own zone in writing.

☐ Done

Month 9 · 4 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Compare offers: funding, costs, visa rules. Accept one offer in writing, pay any deposit by its deadline, and decline the others politely.

Notes: If your home ministry or sponsor must approve your study abroad, get that approval before you accept.

☐ Done

Month 10 · 3 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Apply for your student visa as soon as the university sends the document the visa needs. Prepare proof of funds and health insurance if the visa asks for them.

Notes: Read the embassy's official page for documents, fees and processing time, and book the visa appointment as soon as it allows.

☐ Done

Month 11 · 2 months before

My dates: _____

What to do: Arrange housing, flights and any medical tests the visa or university asks for. Tell your bank you will be abroad.

Notes: Carry the originals of your degree, transcripts and passport, with their translations and attested copies, in your hand luggage.

☐ Done

Month 12 · Arrival

My dates: _____

What to do: Arrive and register with the university and, if required, the local authorities. Open a bank account and keep copies of every enrolment document.

Notes: Keep your enrolment letters and transcripts: you will need them to have the degree recognised at home. In the UAE, for example, the university must be accredited in the country of study.

☐ Done

Stay on track

- Track every application online: scholarmena.com/tools/application-tracker/
- Get verified scholarships by email: sign-up form on scholarmena.com
- Document checklist: scholarmena.com/resources/templates/document-checklist/
- Reference request emails: scholarmena.com/resources/templates/reference-request-email/

Sources

Our editors read these official pages on 10 Nov 2026. If anything differs, the official page is the reference.

1. IELTS results: computer 1 to 2 days, paper up to 13 days; results over 2 years old usually not accepted
   https://saudiarabia.britishcouncil.org/en/exam/ielts/results
2. TOEFL iBT scores 3 days after the test; valid 2 years
   https://www.ets.org/toefl/test-takers/ibt/scores/get-scores.html