

Master of Arts in Sustainable Development Practice

Housing Information 2026/27

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General Housing Information

Room and board are the responsibility of each graduate student, and costs are NOT included in the tuition. However, housing assistance is available through SIT. This document outlines preferred options, but students can find their own housing if preferred.

HOW IS HOUSING ARRANGED?

In program locations, students have two options for housing:

- **Apartments** - This option provides limited cultural and linguistic immersion and involves higher costs, as well as greater independence and personal space. Students are responsible for all their own meal preparation. Students are responsible for locating and confirming their apartments; SIT will provide recommended neighborhoods that are both close to the study centers and safe, and our staff are happy to review some possible listings in advance. Students also will have the opportunity to connect with other cohort members in advance to discuss possible apartment sharing.
- **Homestays** with SIT-vetted families allow for greater cultural and linguistic immersion and lower costs. Breakfast and dinner are provided each day. Homestays also require that students be comfortable with greatly reduced personal space and the need to respect family rules including possible curfews. All homestays include a private room that locks. Students may share bathrooms with other family members.

ACCOMMODATION DURING ORIENTATION AND FIELD VISITS

Students will share a double room with another classmate. The program covers the cost of meals, accommodations, and transportation during orientations and excursions.

Ecuador

HOUSING OPTION - APARTMENT

ECUADOR HOMESTAY	ECUADOR APARTMENT
\$500-750 USD per month	\$400 - \$1000 USD per month depending on neighborhood
Private bedroom and bathroom	1 to 3 bedrooms with kitchen and shared bathroom
Internet- \$65 USD per month	Utilities - \$100 USD per month
2 meals are included (breakfast and dinner)	Internet- \$50 USD per month
Laundry is included	Coin laundry facilities are available in most of the buildings
Distance from program center: 0- 10km (10–30-minute drive, \$4-6 Uber ride)	Distance from program center: 0- 10km (10–30-minute drive, \$4-6 Uber ride)
3 Month Estimated cost for homestay: \$2190 USD	3 Month Estimated budget for apartment: \$1650 – 3450 USD

RECOMMENDED NEIGHBORHOODS IN QUITO

- **Cumbayá** - Located only 10 miles away from Quito's financial and business center, Cumbaya is the recommended neighborhood due to its proximity to USFQ. It also sits at a slightly lower altitude than the rest of Quito (2500 meters vs 2850 meters), so the weather is a bit warmer. Although it is located outside of Quito's financial center, Cumbayá is a highly urbanized neighborhood with lots of restaurants, supermarkets, coffee shops, and services (banks, hospital, etc.).
- **Gonzalez Suarez** - A modern residential neighborhood with lots of housing options. Lots of walkable services nearby such as pharmacies, bakeries, banks, etc. The Balance Works Office (local office) is close by, where you will have office hours and some classes.
- **La Floresta** - Located right next to the Gonzalez Suarez neighborhood, it offers a more relaxed/hipster atmosphere. There are lots of walkable restaurants and cafes as well as services nearby. The Balance Works Office (local office) is also close by, where you will have office hours and some classes.
- **Republica del Salvador** - Considered as Quito's business and financial center. It offers modern housing, it is very walkable to restaurants, bakeries, supermarkets, services, and it is close to Quito's largest park (Parque la Carolina) and the botanical garden.

HOW DO I PAY FOR HOUSING?

- You may pay with a credit or debit cards in some places but be prepared to pay cash for apartments owned by landlords (not part of a business). Using your credit card or debit card in Ecuador is easy and highly recommended.
- The local currency is the US Dollar. ATMs are widely available in Ecuador and are usually a reliable way to get funds in larger cities. A major credit card (AMEX, Visa) is often necessary in emergencies and is highly recommended. If you have a medical situation that requires an overnight visit to the clinic you must have a credit card; your program insurance will reimburse your expenses, but you must pay your bill in cash or credit card before leaving the clinic. You should be able to use a credit card at many upscale shops as well.
- Renewing and receiving reissued credit and debit cards while on the program will be an expensive and highly inconvenient process. Before you leave for your program, please check the expiration dates on your cards to ensure that they will not expire while you are abroad. It is also very important that you make photocopies of all your debit/credit card information and leave them with someone you trust in case your cards are lost or stolen.

ACCESS TO FOOD

Markets and grocery stores are accessible within a 15-minute walk from most housing options or via a short taxi or Uber ride. Students can maintain a vegan/vegetarian diet.

South Africa

HOUSING OPTIONS – HOMESTAY OR APARTMENT

SOUTH AFRICA HOMESTAY	SOUTH AFRICA APARTMENT
\$600 - 800 USD per month	\$500 - \$1500 USD per month depending on neighborhood
Private bedroom and bathroom	1 - 3 bedrooms with kitchen and bathroom
Utilities and internet access – some homestays have WiFi, and they do not charge for utilities.	Utilities and internet access can depend on the apartment. Utilities can be \$50 USD per month and Internet can be \$65 USD per month
2 meals are included (breakfast and dinner)	No meals are included
Some homestays may have washing machines. Others may not.	Some buildings may provide laundry services and cleaning of the apartment. Others may not.
Distance from program center: less than 8km	Distance from program center: less than 5km
3 Month Estimated cost for homestay: \$2100 USD	3 Month Estimated cost for apartment: \$1845-4845 USD

HOW DO I PAY FOR HOUSING?

You can pay with a credit or debit cards in some places but be prepared to pay cash for homestays and for flats owned by landlords (not part of a business). You can pay by credit card or debit card for apartments that are registered as a business, and payment will only be made after a contract is signed. Homestays are paid upfront. Please note that you will need to notify your homestay parents in advance should you have visitors.

The local currency in South Africa is the South African Rand. ATMs are widely available in Cape Town at the program base, although access to them may be more challenging during rural stays. A major credit card (Visa or Mastercard) is often necessary in emergencies and is highly recommended. If you have a medical situation that requires an overnight visit to the clinic you must have a credit card; your program insurance will reimburse your expenses, but you must pay your bill in cash or credit card before leaving the clinic. You should be able to use a credit card in many shops as well.

[Western Union](#) is an international money transfer service that is safe, and charges low rates should students need to transfer money to local bank accounts. You can also try [wise.com](#).

ACCESS TO FOOD

Grocery stores are widely available in Cape Town and all sites where excursions and site visits are held and are generally accessible within a short walk or Uber ride from housing. Cape Town is known as a 'foodie city' and students can maintain most dietary needs – including vegan, vegetarian, halal, kosher, gluten-free, dairy-free etc.

Malawi

HOUSING OPTIONS – HOMESTAY OR APARTMENT

MALAWI HOMESTAY	MALAWI APARTMENT
\$500 USD per month	\$500 - \$950 USD per month depending on neighborhood
Private bedroom and bathroom	1 to 3 bedrooms with kitchen and shared bathroom
Internet- \$65 USD per month	Utilities - \$50 USD per month
2 meals are included (breakfast and dinner)	Internet- \$65 USD per month
Laundry is done by student, or you may pay someone to assist	Some buildings may provide laundry services and cleaning of the apartment
Distance from program center: less than 15km	Distance from program center: less than 5km
3 Month Estimated cost for homestay: \$2290 USD	3 Month Estimated cost for apartment: \$1495-\$3345 USD

HOW DO I PAY FOR HOUSING?

You can pay with a credit or debit cards in some places but be prepared to pay cash for homestays and for flats owned by landlords (not part of a business). You can pay by credit card or debit card for apartments that are registered as a business, and payment will only be made after a contract is signed. Homestays are paid upfront. Please note that you will need to notify your homestay parents in advance should you have visitors.

The local currency in Malawi is Malawi Kwacha. ATMs are widely available in Lilongwe at the program base as well as in all regions where site visits and excursions are done. A major credit card (Visa or Mastercard) is often necessary in emergencies and is highly recommended. If you have a medical situation that requires an overnight visit to the clinic you must have a credit card; your program insurance will reimburse your expenses, but you must pay your bill in cash or credit card before leaving the clinic. You should be able to use a credit card in many shops as well.

[Money Gram](#) is an international money transfer service that is safe, and charges low rates should students need to transfer money to local bank accounts.

ACCESS TO FOOD

Markets and grocery stores are widely available in Lilongwe and all towns where excursions and site visits are held and are accessible within a 15-minute walk from housing or via a short minibus ride. Staple foods in Malawi include rice, nsima, vegetable dishes, chicken, meat, beans, cassava, cabbage, oranges, and papayas. Students can maintain a vegan/vegetarian or fruitarian diet.