

“How can I afford a graduate education?”

Karima Williams, Director of Financial Aid, School of Social Policy & Practice

“Financing a graduate career can be a daunting experience. Fortunately, nearly every student that has been admitted has resources available to them, to help meet the cost of attendance.

“The first part of considering a graduate career is understanding the cost. Aside from tuition and fees, all universities are required to supply an estimated cost of living. SP2 provides this information on our website, at sp2.upenn.edu. If you click on the link for prospective students, and select tuition and tuition assistance from the menu, you will see the cost of tuition, fees, and associated living expenses for our programs.

“Be sure to compare these costs between different schools and programs that you are considering. Bear in mind that these are the base costs and do not include discounts such as scholarships or grants. Also remember that these costs are estimates. Every prospective student should consider what standard of living they expect to maintain and what cost saving strategies they intend to use. Some of these may include commuting from home, staying with a relative, sharing expenses with roommates, buying used books, and things of that nature.

“Students should also consider the location of the schools that they are considering, as the cost of living, varies from city to city; which is not necessarily reflected in the figures provided by all schools. Fortunately the cost of living in Philadelphia is relatively inexpensive compared to other cities in the Northeast. You should also bear in mind that there are additional costs to relocating that are generally not included in the cost of attendance.

“I highly recommend that prospective students take the time to list all of their monthly costs and create a monthly budget for what these expenses may look like when enrolling in a graduate program.

“Once you have a handle of the various costs associated with each school, you should then begin to plan how you will finance your graduate education.”