



# Maldivians Travelling Abroad Survey

18-24 December 2015

Statistics Division  
Maldives Monetary Authority



# Acknowledgement

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# Introduction



This report presents the findings of the Maldivian Travelling Abroad (MTA) 2015 Survey. The main objective of the MTA 2015 survey is to estimate the travel expenditure abroad by the Maldivians as this is one of the key components in the current account of the balance of payment statistics. In order to estimate the travel expenditure of the Maldivians travelling abroad, the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) conducted the survey during the last week of December 2015. The survey was also carried out with the aim of analysing the travel patterns of the Maldivians.

The survey was conducted as an entry survey at the arrival hall of the Ibrahim Nasir International Airport for period of seven days.



# Key Findings of the Survey



According to the statistics of the Maldives Immigration, a total of 7,930 passengers returned back to the Maldives during the survey period. Of the total, 3,891 people were interviewed during the survey period reflecting a response rate of 49% (Table 1).

Table 1: Coverage of Maldivians Travelling Abroad Survey 2015

Summary Findings of Maldivians Abroad Survey	
Number of passengers arrived during survey period	7,930
Number of respondents	3,891
Percentage interviewed in the survey	49%

Source: Maldives Immigration, Maldives Monetary Authority






According to the results (Table 2) the most common destinations for Maldivian travellers were Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. Out of the total returning Maldivian passengers who responded, 40% visited Sri Lanka while 39% stated that their destination of travel was India. Maldivians who visited Malaysia and Thailand accounted for 6% each. Similarly Maldivians who travelled to Singapore accounted for 2% of the returning travelers, Meanwhile, Maldivian travellers categorised under “other destinations” (those who travelled to countries other than those mentioned above and who travelled to more than one country) accounted for 7% of the total.

Table 2: Destinations Travelled by Maldivians

Destinations	No. of People	Percentage
Sri Lanka	1,574	40%
India	1,535	39%
Malaysia	222	6%
Thailand	219	6%
Singapore	85	2%
Other destinations	256	7%
Total	3,891	100%

The most common purpose for the Maldivians to travel abroad was to obtain healthcare services which accounted for 58% of Maldivian passengers covered in the survey, while 27% cited their main purpose of travel was for vacation. Similarly, 6% of the passengers covered in the survey cited the main purpose of their travel as education and training, while 3% travelled for business purpose (Table 3).

Table 3: Purpose of Travel

Destinations	No. of People	Percentage
 Healthcare	2,247	58%
 Vacation	1,056	27%
 Education	244	6%
 Business	120	3%
 Other purposes	224	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,891</b>	<b>100%</b>



The survey was conducted as an entry survey at the arrival hall of Ibrahim Nasir International Airport over the course of seven days from 18-24 December 2015. In order to collect the information, face-to-face interviews were carried out between enumerators and passengers while they waited for their luggage after clearance from immigration. The sampling method used during the survey could be identified as convenience sampling, as the target of this survey was to cover as many returning Maldivians during the survey period.

A total of 19 enumerators along with 4 supervisors took part in conducting the survey. The first shift of enumerators worked from 09:30AM till 6PM while the second shift of enumerators worked from 06:45PM till 12AM to ensure that major flights were covered. Although the survey questionnaire was designed in English, the interview process was conducted in Dhivehi for ease of communication. Flights which arrived out of the shift timings remained uncovered.





Survey data were analysed and treated using R statistical software. Prior to 2015, MTA survey results were analysed and treated in spreadsheet software and assumptions for outliers were made case by case in order to reduce the number of entries being removed at the data cleaning stage. However, in analysing MTA 2015 survey data, 'R' was used in order to analyse data using a scientific and systematic approach which would also facilitate consistent method of data cleaning in future. Hence, due to the change in data processing method, the results of surveys prior to 2015 will not be consistent with results of MTA survey 2015 and therefore they cannot be compared with the results of the latter survey.

## Average Expenditure on Airfare



The information collected on airfare indicate that the average expenditure on return airfare to Sri Lanka and India—the most popular two destinations, were US\$197 and US\$266 per person respectively. Likewise, average expenditure on airfare to Malaysia and Thailand was US\$340 and US\$441 per person respectively. Meanwhile, the survey results showed that the average airfare to Singapore was US\$503 per person per trip (Table 4).

Table 4: Average airfare by destination

Destinations	Average Airfare (US\$)
Sri Lanka	197
India	266
Malaysia	340
Thailand	441
Singapore	503

# Analysis by Purpose of Travel



## Healthcare

The majority of the Maldivian passengers, 2,247 (58%) stated that the main reason for their travel was for medical purpose. The survey results showed that the main destination for medical travel was India which accounted for 57%, followed by Sri Lanka with 37%. Thailand was the choice of destination for 4% of Maldivians who travelled abroad for medical purpose while Malaysia and Singapore accounted for 1% each (Table 5).

Table 5: Average expenditure and duration of stay for medical purpose by destination

Destinations	No. of People (%)	Duration of Stay per Person	Expenditure Abroad
India	1281 (57%)	14	512
Sri Lanka	823 (37%)	10	515
Thailand	81 (4%)	10	864
Malaysia	19 (1%)	17	973
Singapore	12 (1%)	8	663
Other	31 (1%)	17	711
Total <sup>1</sup>	2247 (100%)	12	528

Maldivians who travelled to India for medical purpose is estimated to have stayed around 14 days on average and spent about US\$512 per person while Maldivian travellers to Sri Lanka for the same purpose have stayed for 10 days on average and spent US\$515 per person. Likewise Maldivians who travelled Thailand for the medical purpose is estimated to have spent 10 days and incurred a cost of US\$864 per person on average.

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<sup>1</sup>Total duration of stay and expenditure abroad is the weighted average.



## Holiday Purpose

Out of the total who responded, 1,056 Maldivians stated that their purpose for travel was for holiday and this reflected 27% of the Maldivians passengers covered in the survey.

Table 6: Average expenditure and duration of stay for vacation by destination

Destinations	No. of People (%)	Duration of Stay per Person	Expenditure Abroad
Sri Lanka	549 (52%)	9	503
India	202 (19%)	13	567
Malaysia	119 (11%)	14	835
Thailand	80 (8%)	11	963
Singapore	32 (3%)	16	1,088
Other	74 (7%)	13	1,138
<b>Total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1056 (100%)</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>664</b>

Out of the total Maldivians who travelled abroad for holiday, 52% visited Sri Lanka, indicating the most popular destination for Maldivian holidaymakers. India and Malaysia followed with each accounting 19% and 11% respectively. Similarly, Maldivian holidaymakers to Thailand and Singapore accounted for 8% and 3% respectively. Meanwhile Maldivians who travelled to other destinations as well as who travelled to more than one destination for their vacation accounted for 7% (Table 6).

With regard to expenditure, the survey results indicated that Maldivians who travelled for vacation is estimated to have spent on average US\$503 per person and spent 9 days on average in Sri Lanka. In line with that, Maldivian holidaymakers who travelled India is estimated to have spent 13 days on average and incurred a cost of US\$567 per person on average. Furthermore, Maldivians who travelled to Malaysia for the same purpose is estimated to have spent 14 days on average and spent US\$835 per person on average.

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<sup>2</sup>Total duration of stay and expenditure abroad is the weighted average.

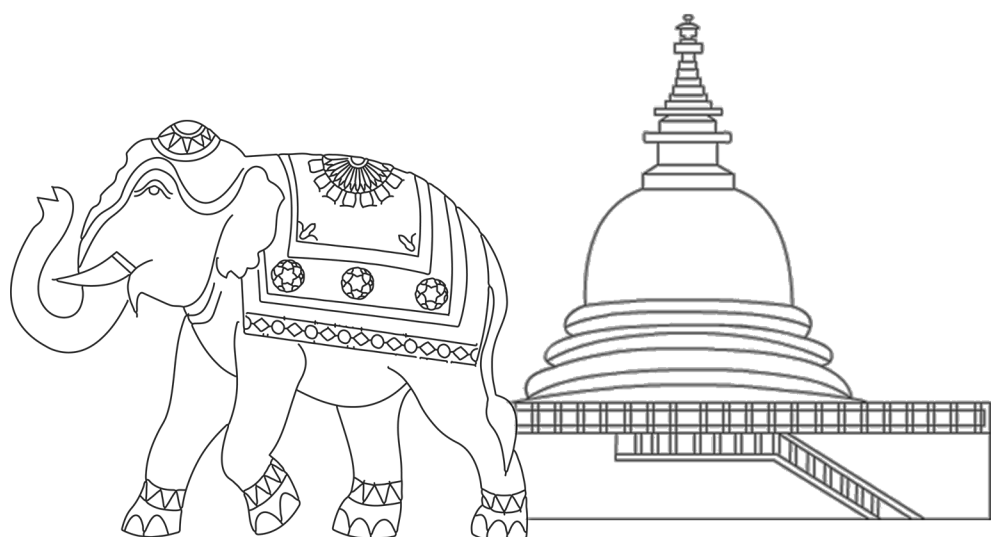


## Sri Lanka

Out of the returning Maldivians who responded, 40% travelled to Sri Lanka and their duration of stay in Sri Lanka was 11 days on average. The total expenditure during this period is estimated to be US\$554 per person per trip or US\$51 per person per day. Out of the total Maldivians who travelled to Sri Lanka, 52% mentioned their main purpose of visit as healthcare services and it is estimated that they spent a total of 10 days at the destination on average and incurred an average expenditure of US\$515 per person during their stay. Meanwhile 35% of Maldivians who travelled to Sri Lanka mentioned that the purpose of their travel was for vacation and is estimated to have incurred a cost of US\$503 per person for an average duration of 9 days. A further, 2% of Maldivians who travelled to the same destination cited their main purpose of travel was business and they spent about US\$1,030 per person per trip for an average duration of 3 days (Table 7).

Table 7: Travel to Sri Lanka – The Purpose and Expenditure

Purpose	No. of People (%)	Average Duration of Stay	Average Expenditure Abroad	
			Per Day	Per Head
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,574</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>554</b>
o/w Health	823 (52%)	10	51	515
Vacation	549 (35%)	9	53	503
Business	38 (2%)	3	255	1030

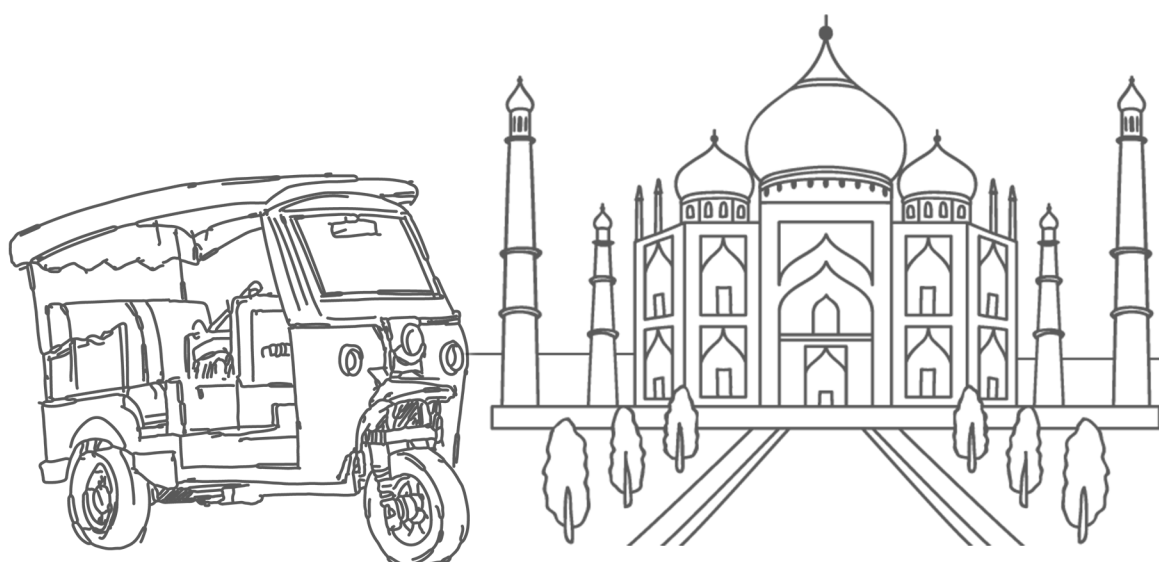


# India

According to the survey results, 39% of the respondents visited India and stayed there for an average duration of 14 days. The average expenditure for the duration of the stay is estimated to be US\$524 per person or US\$39 per person per day. Out of those who travelled to India, 83% mentioned their main purpose of visit as healthcare services and spent US\$512 per person on average for an average duration of 14 days. Meanwhile 13% visited India for vacation and is estimated to have spent US\$567 per person on average for an average duration of 13 days. Further, Maldivians who travelled to India for business purpose accounted for less than one per cent and is estimated to have spent 6 days on average and incurred an average expenditure of US\$745 per person during their trip (Table 8).

Table 8: Travel to India – The Purpose and Expenditure

Purpose	No. of People (%)	Average Duration of Stay	Average Expenditure Abroad	
			Per Day	Per Head
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,535</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>524</b>
o/w Health	1281 (83%)	14	39	512
Vacation	202 (13%)	13	43	567
Business	7 (<1%)	6	87	745



# Malaysia

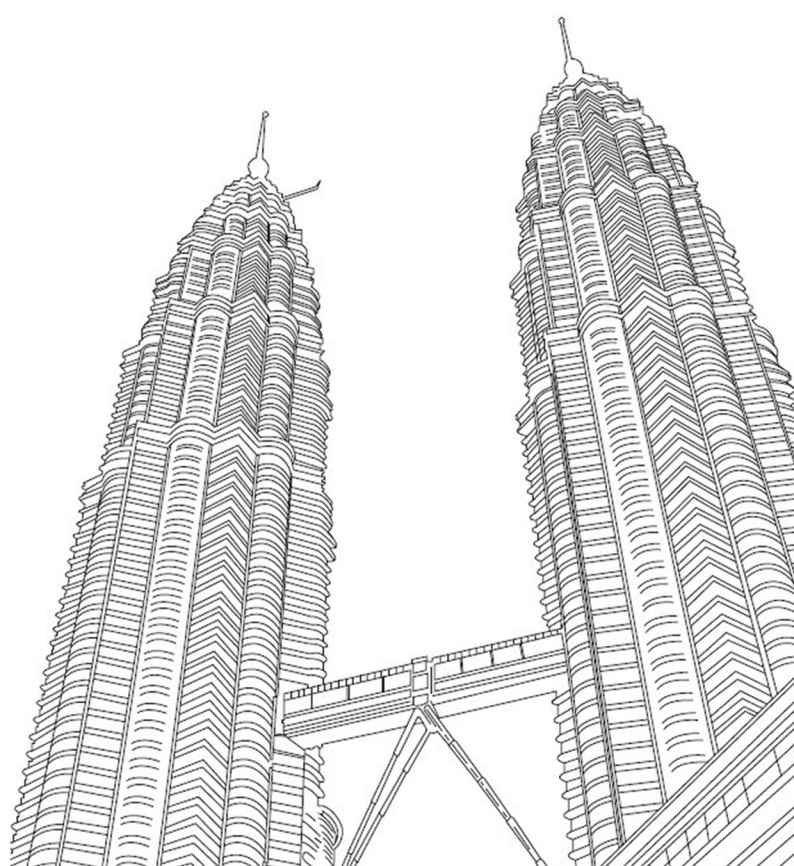
As per the results of the survey, out of the total retuning Maldivian passengers who responded, 6% travelled to Malaysia and stayed for an average duration of 43 days . On average, the expenditure for the duration of the stay is estimated to be US\$1,062 per person or US\$25 per person per day. Of those who travelled to Malaysia, 54% cited that their main purpose of travel was for vacation and spent US\$835 per person for an average duration of 14 days. Meanwhile, 9% of Maldivians mentioned that the purpose of their travel was to obtain healthcare services and have incurred a cost of US\$973 per person on average for an average duration of 17 days. Furthermore, Maldivians who travelled to Malaysia for business purpose accounted for less than one percent of the total and is estimated to have spent US\$700 per person on average for an average duration of 4 days (Table 9).

Table 9: Travel to Malaysia – The Purpose and Expenditure

Purpose	No. of People (%)	Average Duration of Stay	Average Expenditure Abroad	
			Per Day	Per Head
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1,062</b>
o/w Vacation	119 (54%)	14	64	835
Health	19 (9%)	17	57	973
Business	1 (<1%)	4	175	700

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<sup>3</sup>Compared to other counties, students who travelled to Malaysia for education was high, which resulted to the overall increase in the average duration of the trip.

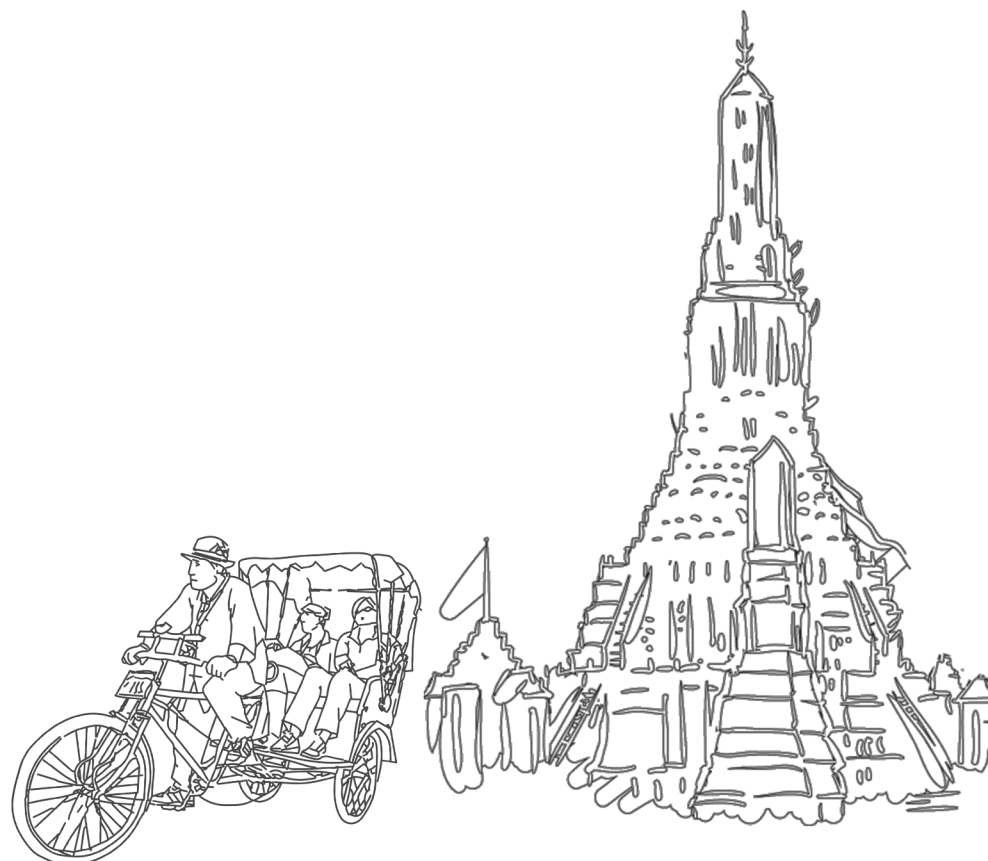


# Thailand

Survey results showed that 6% of the Maldivians, who responded, travelled to Thailand and their duration of stay on average was 10 days. On average, the expenditure per person for the duration of the trip is estimated to be US\$844 or US\$92 per person per day. Out of the total Maldivians who travelled to Thailand, 37% travelled to obtain healthcare services and is estimated to have spent US\$864 per person on average for an average duration of 10 days. Meanwhile same proportion of Maldivians (37%) mentioned the purpose of their travel as vacation and is estimated to have incurred a cost of US\$963 per person on average, for an average duration of 11 days. Further, 18% of Maldivians who travelled to the same destination cited that the purpose of their travel as business and is estimated to have spent US\$847 per person on average for an average duration of 6 days (Table 10).

Table 10: Travel to Thailand – The Purpose and Expenditure

Purpose	No. of People (%)	Average Duration of Stay	Average Expenditure Abroad Per Day	Per Head
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>844</b>
o/w Health	81 (37%)	10	84	864
Vacation	80 (37%)	11	95	963
Business	39 (18%)	6	113	847



# Limitations



Several limitations must be taken into account before interpreting the results from the Maldivians Travelling Abroad Survey 2015. First of all, the survey was conducted during the school holidays, during which the proportion of the Maldivians travelling for medical and holiday purposes tends to be higher compared to the rest of the year. Furthermore, the airfare collected during the survey may not reflect the prices throughout the year, due to seasonally adjusted price markings and/or due to special promotional airfares introduced during the period. Furthermore, the rate of rejection was considerably higher than the previous rounds of surveys which might have affected results of the survey.

Even though the survey aims at collecting information from the students studying abroad, percentage of students covered remain low. This may be attributed to the fact that travel patterns of students vary depending on their specific academic calendars which may not coincide with that of Maldives.

It should also be noted that the travel patterns of Maldivians vary throughout the year, hence a similar survey conducted during off-peak season may yield different results.

Furthermore, this survey was limited to the Maldivian travelling abroad via Ibrahim Nasir International Airport and does not represent the Maldivians travelled abroad via Gan and Hani-maadhoo International Airport.





## Questionnaire



### Maldivians Travelling Abroad Survey 2015

<b>Form No.</b>	<<Form No>>	<b>Enum. Name.</b>		<b>Date:</b>	-- / 12 / 2015
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#### SECTION 1

##### 1.1 Purpose of visit

- a. Medical
- b. Holiday
- c. Education / Training
- d. Business
- e. Government purpose
- f. Other, specify:

##### 1.2 Country and city travelled

- a. India
- b. Sri Lanka
- c. Malaysia
- d. Singapore
- e. Thailand
- f. Other, specify:

##### 1.3 Expense arrangement

- Domestic
- a. Personal/Business
  - b. Aasandha/NSPA
  - c. Government
  - d. Insurance
- Foreign income earners

abc

country / city

comment

#### SECTION 2

2.1 Date of departure

D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

2.2 Number of people spent for

1	2
---	---

2.3 Airfare:

\$	\$	a	1234
----	----	---	------

2.4 Number of:

<	2	2	12	>	12
---	---	---	----	---	----

2.5 Return ticket

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.6 Class	abc
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2.7 Airline travelled

abc
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##### 2.8 Type of accomodation

- a. Family / Relative / Friend
- b. Paying guest
- c. Serviced apartment
- d. Hotel / Guesthouse
- e. Health facility

abc

#### SECTION 3

##### 3.1 Total expenditure (excluding cost of airfare)

a. Total expenditure

\$	\$	1234
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b. Includes card expenditure?

- Yes  No  If NO, total card expenditure

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

c. Includes expenditure covered by Aasandha?

- Yes  No  If YES, total expenditure by Aasandha

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

d. Includes expenditure on goods for resale?

- Yes  No  If YES, total expenditure on goods for resale

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

##### 3.2 Expenditure details

a. Medical

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

b. Education

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

c. Transport

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

d. Accomodation

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

e. Food

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

f. Personal items

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

g. Other

\$	\$	1234
----	----	------

#### SECTION 4 (Students only, excluding trainings)

4.1 Course duration (in years)

Total	12	Completed	12	Remaining	12
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4.2 Course fee

\$	\$	Per semester	1234	Per year	1234	Total	1234
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4.3 Name of the course

abc
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4.4 College / University

abc
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