

Notes on motivation statement writing

With (minor) adaptations for the
erasmus application context

Contexts

- JOBS and INTERNSHIPS:

cover letter / motivation letter

- University degrees (undergraduate and postgraduate):

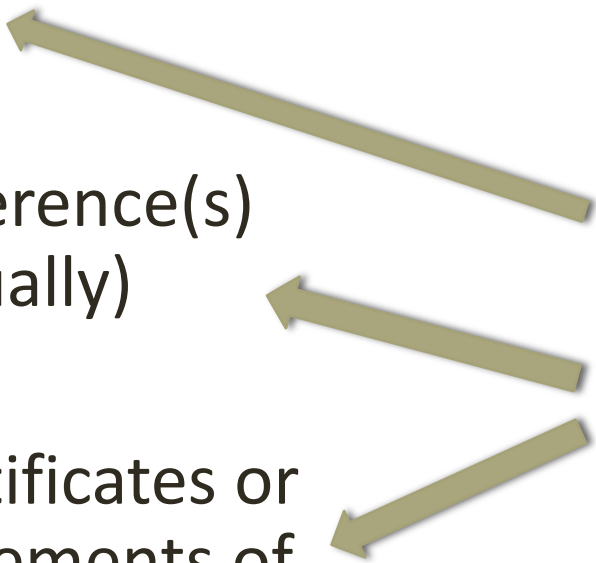
motivation statement

- **ERASMUS applications**



Is the man in bed a reader or a writer of cover letters, do you think?

Applying for a job or university degree requires

- **CV**
 - Reference(s) (usually)
 - Certificates or statements of language proficiency (often)
- A **MOTIVATION STATEMENT** or **COVER** letter add more ***RELEVANCE*** to all of these
- 

PURPOSE

The letter or statement aims to convince the reader that you are the best or among the best candidates for the position.



- CONTENTS
- STRUCTURE
- LANGUAGE & STYLE

The above must be given careful consideration in relation to the overall purpose.

Cover letter: structure

YOUR ADDRESS &
CONTACT DETAILS

ADDRESSEE'S NAME
AND ADDRESS

DATE

January 15th, 2014

15th January, 2014

DEAR MR/MS/MRS SIR / MADAM, *Make every effort to find and use the name of the addressee if it is not provided*

- 1) WHAT YOU ARE APPLYING FOR. *Say where you found the information*
- 2) WHY YOU ARE SUITED TO THE POSITION *What are the qualifications, experience, personality, disposition which make you the right person for the post. Here, your close reading and understanding of the job / course requirements should emerge.*
- 3) WHY YOU WANT THE POSITION *How will the post / course fit into your life plan? What will you gain from it, and what will you contribute to the organisation / context?*
- 4) CLOSURE *Thank the addressee for their time in reading your application. Show your availability for follow-up and where you can be contacted.*

YOURS SINCERELY / FAITHFULLY,

ENCLOSED: *(References, CV, degree certificate or whatever is required)*

Motivation statement: structure

- What exchanges you're applying for
- Why you're qualified to go on erasmus and on those exchanges in particular
- Why you want to go on erasmus and on those exchanges in particular
- Closure

Where do these phrases go:

1) opening 2) why suited 3) why interested 4) closure

Catchphrases To Use in Your Cover Letter



Dos and don'ts of motivation letter writing

DO	DON'T
THINK CAREFULLY AND PLAN	IMPROVISE
RESEARCH THE POSITION	ASSUME
BE ORIGINAL	USE CLICHES, HACKNEYED EXPRESSIONS
PERSONALISE	BE IMPERSONAL OR 'GREY'
BE BRIEF AND ORDERLY	REPEAT OR USE LONG, COMPLEX SENTENCES
TAILOR YOUR LETTER TO THE SPECIFIC OCCASION	USE AN ALL-PURPOSE TEXT
GIVE REASONS	GUSH EMOTIONS
PUT YOURSELF IN THE BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT	BE MODEST
PROOF-READ & REVISE SEVERAL TIMES: spelling, style, grammar	DO IT IN A HURRY
ASK FRIENDS' OR EXPERT OPINIONS	RELY ENTIRELY ON YOURSELF

Content

- Respect the principles of good communication:

clarity, precision, economy, truth

- Coherence: show how your past, present and future aspirations are linked
- Show some understanding of what the position requires and (if appropriate) how it compares with other positions
- If appropriate, show some realistic self-assessment of your strengths and weaknesses, **emphasising the strengths**
- Mention not only what the experience will do for you, but what you can bring to the experience

LANGUAGE

Avoiding clichés and achieving authenticity and impact



Your language should NOT be, or use, any of these

The word cloud consists of the following terms arranged around the central word:

- buzzword
- uncreative
- Trite saying
- Well-worn
- overused
- tired
- unoriginal
- Platitude
- commonplace
- Insipidity
- banality
- tedious
- shopworn
- threadbare
- flat
- Vapid expression
- stale phrase
- Stock phrase
- timeworn
- stereotype
- inanity

cliché

on the other hand ... don't exaggerate

Hello,

I live my life by the standards of three P's: Professionalism, Personality, Perseverance. Also, Precognition, but that's more of a skill than a standard. I predict any position I take, I will thrive and grow, and if properly nurtured and cajoled, I will rise to the utmost levels of your expectations. You might consider me a silver winged unicorn soaring over (and outshining) the brightest and most colorful of rainbows as angelic voices sing a heavenly and over-modulated version of "Come Down."

Thing is, I won't become this single horned soaring beauty if not given the opportunity to speak words in between songs twice every 30 minutes. That 98 seconds of verbiage per hour (about 5 minutes total per 4 hour shift) is a dream within a dream within an afterthought wrapped up in a memory and intertwined with the desires of my soul. A few words and their effect on me:

"Ad copy" Causes me to blush with warmth.

"Sound Check" Makes me shudder in ecstasy.

"Song Dedication" Things swell and explode inside of me. It's painful...but good.

Oh, there's more, but this cover letter might become as lengthy as the list of Pearl Jam songs released but never heard by anyone. Let me know when you would like to have me spread my voice of warm golden butter across your airwaves and straight to the thighs, hips, and buttocks of your listeners ears.

In sincerenessissity,

Future On-Air Personality

Clichés to avoid



Dear Sir/Madam...
Dear Potential Customer...
Dear fellow citizen...
Dear friend...
Mon ami...
Hey you gorgeous thing, you...
Dude...

Salutation

To whom it may concern NO!

Dear Sir or Madam (if at all possible, NO ..)

Make every effort to find out the name of the person to whom your application should be addressed (it may seem lazy if you haven't)

Opening

I'd like to apply for a job at .. NO!

I'm applying for the role of ... at .. AVOID IF POSSIBLE

This should be obvious from the subject line or the context. Make the post, or your inspiration for writing, the STARTING POINT in your opening:

I learned about this opportunity ..

Whilst visiting ... I discovered this ...

Why I'm suited to the position

I'm a huge fan of this company ...

I think I'm the perfect candidate for this position ..

I'm the best person for the job ..

I'm a perfect match ..

I'm an excellent team player and can work independently

I'm highly motivated

I'm passionate

I'm enthusiastic

I'm dynamic

I'm creative

I'm solution-focussed

DON'T JUST SAY THESE THINGS!

PROVE THEM WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE:

My experience at X shows / proves that

As my work at Y demonstrates ...

Why I want the job

This is exactly the kind of role I'm looking for

I am looking for a unique opportunity in which I will be adequately challenged and compensated .. NO!

I've always dreamed of working in an organisation like this NO!

This would be a great opportunity for me NO!

DON'T FORGET THAT THEY ARE MORE INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THEM . SAY RATHER, WHAT YOU COULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE ORGANISATION



What can you do for them?



Closure

I really hope that you will give me this opportunity

I really need to get this position

KEEP YOUR SELF-RESPECT. BETTER CLOSE STATING
EXPECTATION OF AND AVAILABILITY FOR FOLLOW-UP,
AND THANKING ...:

*Thank you for taking the time to read my application. I'll
be glad to supply any further information you may
require. I look forward to hearing from you.*

A good erasmus motivation statement

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a student at the University of Trieste, currently attending my second year in International Sciences and Diplomacy in Gorizia.

I decided to apply for an Erasmus programme as I find every university student willing to shape his/her own future around international values should benefit from a cosmopolitan comparison and understanding. In addition, this could represent a precious way to work on my linguistic skills since, to me, no other way is better than actually living in a foreign dimension. I attended a linguistic high school, I can speak English, French and German and I am currently learning Spanish. Linking to what I said before, we need to realise that French has been for centuries the language for diplomacy and that most of the EU institutions adopt it along with English.

The **Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris** is my first choice. Along with its reliable reputation as prestigious and ancient French institute, its quality programmes, based on five major subjects - Law, Economics, History, Political Science and Sociology - can be accompanied by some extra artistic, literary and scientific studies, which is something I am currently missing a lot. This would mean further develop my own path through versatile insights into international issues and through pragmatic methods (reports, presentation delivering...), which represents relevant part of the SciencesPo teaching choice.

Moreover, the town of Paris offers a stimulating environment, home to different major international organizations. Also, it has hosted important conferences, where historical treaties, like the COOP21 in December 2015, have been signed and it has been at the heart of internationally relevant, and very sad, episodes in the latest years and months. After my graduation, actually, I would like to apply for an internship at the UNESCO, which is based in Paris; I believe that living such an experience there now could possibly help me get a step closer to my plans.

My second choice is the **Ludwig Maximilians Universität München**, due to my desire to develop part of my studies in the German tongue. Furthermore, this institute benefits from the renowned scientific pole it hosts, by offering students of Political Sciences interesting occasions for field research. This appeals to me very much, having got a taste of what being a researcher actually means during my Sociology course last year.

All in all, I picture an Erasmus experience as a challenging one, which could mean very much to an enterprising personality like mine. Honestly, I expect it to give me 'directions': the experience could actually help me realise which specific course of my studies I feel I really want to orientate and devote to. Briefly, to 'enlighten' me on my future since, at the end, it will be time for me to graduate and, once again, to make a relevant decision concerning my studies and my future life.

Thank you.

General & specific
motivation

Gives reasons.
Evidence of research
on destinations

What erasmus will
bring her

A less good motivation
statement

Dear Sir or Madam,

With this letter, I would like to express my interest in studying at the University of Nantes as an Erasmus student. I am sure that, if accepted there, I would develop both academically and personally. I have decided to apply for this programme because I am confident it would strongly enrich my future studies and help me in my prospective career. Moreover, I consider this programme as a great opportunity to get in touch with French culture and educational system. Acquiring a good knowledge of the French language is, by the way, one of the reasons why I would like to join your program, as well as the one proposed by the University of Liege, for which I applied as a second option. As a young student, in fact, I studied French randomly and superficially, then I had the opportunity to follow two courses at University, but I feel, nonetheless, that I have not achieved an adequate fluency yet. I am sure that, spending some months in Nantes, would help me greatly to fill the gap and increase my confidence in passing the exams requested by my University in this language after I return. I am currently studying Politics and International Relations at the University of Gorizia (Italy), where I have developed a deep interest in history, which, I am sure, will find further motivation in the University of Nantes. I also appreciated the presentation of their courses and the teaching approach offered, which seems to be modern and very practical at the same time. Drawing near the end of my third year of University, I feel that I need to start looking at the professional world, and this is exactly what their courses seem to offer. Last but not least, I must say I have always been in love with France, which I consider the place I would like to live in, and therefore I am confident that the time spent in that town would be extremely fun and valuable for both my studies and overall general development.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to your positive response.

Respectfully submitted,



Due to his grammar mistake, Wilbur found a position. It just wasn't the one he wanted.