

# How to write a Letter of Motivation for an application for studying abroad

When applying for a semester abroad, you will have to submit several documents, among which is a letter of motivation.<sup>1</sup> Wondering what to write in this letter? Here are some tips:

After submitting your application, it will usually be read by one or several person(s) who are in charge of selecting future exchange students. Depending on the exchange program, these will be staff of the International Office (for direct exchange programs of Goethe University) or of the faculties (e.g. for Erasmus) and in certain cases lecturers who have academic ties to the host country you are applying for (e.g. a lecturer of the Department of American Studies when applying for studies abroad in the USA).

The letter of motivation is supposed to be 1-2 pages (max. 4.500 characters incl. spaces). Your name should be on it, but mentioning recipient and subject is not necessary. Please see the call for applications about the language in which you are supposed to write the letter of motivation.

In your letter of motivation, please talk about the following topics/questions (not necessarily in this order):

- Why would you like to study abroad?
- What qualifications and skills of yours will be beneficial when studying abroad?
- Name your personal reasons why you would like to study in this particular country or at this particular university. Avoid irrelevant reasons such as „the beaches there are awesome“ or „I've always wanted to see the great nature there“. Family reunions cannot be a main reason either. Remember, this is an academic exchange!
- What courses would you like to take at the host institution? How would those fit into your studies at Goethe-Universität?
- Do you have a research interest/endeavor that you would like to pursue at the host institution? In what way will studying at the desired host institution benefit your BA or MA thesis?
- Write about your extracurricular activities as well as your career and future plans. In what way would studying abroad at your desired host institution benefit your future studies, life and career?
- Speaking about the country you are applying for, what are your personal and cultural interests?
- In what way will you participate in cultural exchange during your study abroad period?

Remember: Your letter of motivation is supposed to convince those who select future exchange students that you are the best possible applicant to participate in this exchange.

**Good luck!**

Study Abroad Team, International Office | May 2019

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<sup>1</sup> These tips refer to the letter of motivation to be submitted as part of an application for one of the direct exchange programs administered by the central International Office of Goethe University.