

Your Motivation Letter. Why is it so important?

The motivation letter is your chance to tell us about you, what motivates you, your story, your dreams, your plans, your ambitions, and to tell us why we should offer you a place to study with us.

Your motivation letter should be unique to you and tailored to the programme you're applying for. Make sure you include the title of the programme, the name of your potential research group and/or potential supervisor, and the reasons why you think that our university, this PhD programme and your potential supervisor are the right match for you. It should be up to 2,500 words long, and written in formal English, Catalan or Spanish.

Ask someone you trust to check your motivation letter before you upload it. Be especially careful to check the spelling and grammar. The statement is supposed to demonstrate your writing and reasoning skills, as well as your passion for your subject and research topic.

What should I include?

Make sure your personal statement includes the following things:

Why have you chosen this particular programme?

We are particularly interested in hearing about your passion for the specific doctoral programme you're applying for. Take a look at the programme content carefully, and decide what interests you about it. You can then make sure that your statement outlines what the programme offers you, focusing particularly on the research line you have selected and the research of your potential supervisor/research group. You should discuss what you've studied in the past, including any relevant research or programme work you might have done, and show how your studies are relevant to the course you're applying for. If you can, try and include subject-specific language that shows you have a grasp of the topic.

Your experience

The motivation letter is not only about discussing your studies. We are also interested in you as a person: what has led you to apply for a PhD programme, any extracurricular experiences you have made that have left an impression on you, and research experiences you have had.

Future plans

We do not only care about your past and what has led you to us. We're also very interested in your plans for the future, your career aspirations, how our programme could help you in the future, and most importantly, what you'd like to do during your doctoral course and why.

Top tips

1. Remember to make your letter personal, and to use the title of the programme you're applying for. It should not be a generic application to any programme. It is about you applying to a specific programme under specific supervision, and we need to know about that.
2. Check your spelling and grammar: we don't expect you to be a native speaker, but we expect you to care, and to try as hard as possible to make a clear and well-structured statement.
3. Be clear and concise: your statement should be no more than 2,500 words long.
4. Have the document checked by someone you trust.