How to Write a Strong Letter of Motivation

Japan Gateway

The letter of motivation is a central component of your application and provides insight into your personality and your reasons for applying. A strong letter of motivation is informative, specific, and pleasant to read in terms of style.

When preparing your letter of motivation, please consider the following questions:

- Why am I studying my degree program at Düsseldorf University of Applied Sciences, and what academic interests do I pursue within it?
- What extracurricular qualifications, skills, activities, or commitments shape me?
    - Social, cultural, political, or university-related engagement
    - Language skills and other special competencies outside my field of study
- Why do I want to participate in the Japan Gateway Winter School, and why am I interested in a study experience in Japan?
- What academic knowledge, projects, modules, or experiences do I bring to the topic of “Mixed Media and Human Data Interaction”?
- What would I like to work on, learn, or develop academically during the Winter School, and what academic contribution can I make?
- What academic, personal, and professional benefits do I expect from participating, and how does the Winter School fit into my broader goals?
- How am I preparing linguistically and interculturally for the stay, or what relevant prior knowledge and experience do I already have? Have I been to Japan before?
- What challenges might arise during the Winter School or my stay in Japan, and how would I deal with them?
- From both an academic and personal perspective, why am I particularly suited to participate in the Winter School?

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Please make sure to observe the following guidelines:

- Write your letter of motivation in English (the working language of the Winter School).
- The maximum length is two A4 pages.
- Structure your letter into clear thematic sections and address at least all of the questions listed above.
- Refer specifically to the Winter School topic and describe in concrete terms what you intend to work on academically during the program.
- Avoid general statements and clichés such as “I want to work in an international environment” or “I want to step outside my comfort zone.” Be as specific as possible, support your statements with examples from your studies, professional experience, or extracurricular activities, and clearly explain your goals and expectations.
- Write the letter independently. You may use AI tools for assistance with language and phrasing. However, the ideas, experiences, and plans presented must be your own.
- All information provided must be truthful. It may be discussed in greater depth during the selection interview.
- Take your time to get it right. Members of the selection committee can immediately recognize whether a letter of motivation has been carefully thought through, well written, and clearly structured.
- Proofread your letter carefully and ask a second person to review it as well. Errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation can diminish an otherwise positive impression.
- Remember: A strong letter of motivation can compensate for weaknesses in your academic transcript.

We wish you every success.
The Japan Gateway Winter School Team