

Spotlight



Letter of Motivation

SCHWER AUDIO by Clare Maas

Nora, a student, is just preparing her application for a DAAD grant. As she still has a few questions, she has set up an appointment with an advisor from the International Office of her local university. The recording is in two parts.

Part one

Nora: I read on the website of the German Academic Exchange Service that I need to write a letter of motivation to apply for a scholarship. I just wanted to ask for some advice or tips.

Mr Amin: First of all, you should know that you'll need to write two to three pages, and include information about your academic experience and motivation for applying.

Nora: So I'll write about my studies so far, right?

Mr Amin: Exactly. Include the basic facts about your education. Mention what degree programme you're in, how many semesters you have studied for, and if you're already in a postgraduate programme, then state what Bachelor's degree you have and your grades.

Nora: A Bachelor's degree? I wasn't sure if that was a requirement or not. My plan is to research for my Bachelor's dissertation at an Australian university library. But I have done work placements as part of my studies. Are they relevant?

Mr Amin: Absolutely! In your letter, briefly describe your work experience, and you should also show how you applied the knowledge from university in your work.

Nora: Well they were compulsory placements, part of the curriculum, so that shouldn't be a problem.

Mr Amin: So then you'll have plenty to write about in that part of the application. Then, as the name says, you'll need to write about your motivation for applying for this scholarship and for going abroad.

Nora: Hmm... honestly, I'd like the scholarship so I have enough money for my trip.

Mr Amin: You could say that the financial support from the scholarship would enable you to concentrate on your studies, without needing to work.

Nora: Brilliant! Thank you!

Part two

Nora: And then comes the part about why I want to go abroad.

Mr Amin: Right. So you'll need to think about the university you're applying to study at and what makes it relevant for your project. Explain why you would like to do what you propose and why you would like to do it at that institution specifically. You mentioned Australia?

Nora: Yes. My degree is in English and Politics, and I'm planning to write my final dissertation on mandatory voting in Australian elections. Online I found that the University of Sydney is ranked

very highly for its Political Science programmes, so I expect they have resources.

Mr Amin: That already sounds like a justification for doing your project abroad. So that gives us your current academic situation and a brief rationale for your academic pursuits abroad. The next part of your letter could include information about yourself. May I ask if you have personal reasons for choosing Australia? Or longer-term career goals that might lead in that direction?

Nora: Yes, going to Australia is a personal choice as well as an academic one. I spent six months after school doing a work and travel trip in Australia, and I got to know a lot of people and some very supportive host families. The country itself fascinates me, too. So in my studies of English I've always focused on Australia. Like taking literature classes based on writers from there, or an Australian cultural studies class. I think it also gives my degree a kind of unity, bringing my two subjects together somehow. And maybe, if I can find a job there, I'd go back again after university.

Mr Amin: It sounds like you have very good reasons to support your application! Just one area seems to be missing, though, and that's your personality and individual qualities. You should probably include some information about why you would be a good candidate for the scholarship. What I mean is that you should outline any extracurricular activities you're involved in, or special achievements, or personal qualities that say something about your character and show that you would make the most of the opportunity to research abroad if you were granted this scholarship. See?

Nora: So having spent time abroad shows I'm resilient. And I was awarded a prize for a photo exhibition I organized that focused on the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand. Things like that? Could I also mention playing netball?

Mr Amin: Exactly that kind of thing is what the selection committee will be interested in hearing about. And yes; playing netball demonstrates your ability to cooperate in a team and function under pressure.

Nora: Would you mind if I just recapped? I need to include things about my degree right now, my plan for researching at the University of Sydney, why I would like the scholarship for that, and some things that make me stand out from the crowd.

Mr Amin: Yes. Include all of those things and you'll have a strong letter of motivation! Good luck!

EXERCISE

Vocabulary: The following words are used in the audio recording. Make sure you know what they mean. Define them in your own words or find synonyms. An example has been done for you.

netball – a team ball game similar to basketball.

- compulsory
- curriculum
- dissertation
- extracurricular activities
- mandatory
- pursuit
- rationale
- resilient
- scholarship
- justification
- to rank
- to recap
- to research
- to support

Listening: Now listen to the audio recordings twice. First, just listen and make sure you understand. Second, take notes on the most important points.

ANSWERS

a. compulsory	– must be done because of a law or a rule
b. curriculum	– the subjects that are included in a course of study or taught in a school, college, etc.
c. dissertation	– a long piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one written for a university degree
d. extracurricular activities	– hobbies or other activities not part of the usual course of work or studies at a school or college
e. mandatory	– must be done because of a law or a rule
f. pursuit	– something that you give your time and energy to
g. rationale	– the principles or reasons that explain a particular decision, course of action, belief, etc.
h. resilient	– able to feel better quickly after something unpleasant such as shock, injury, etc.
i. scholarship	– an amount of money given to somebody by an organization to help pay for their education
j. justification	– an explanation or reason for something or for doing something
k. to rank	– achieve a particular position on a scale according to quality, importance, success, etc.
l. to recap	– (=recapitulate) to repeat or give a summary of what has already been said, decided, etc.
m. to research	– to study something carefully and try to discover new facts about it
n. to support	– to help or encourage something to be successful by giving it money



In fünf Schritten zum Studium, Praktikum oder Sprachkurs im Ausland: „studieren weltweit – ERLEBE ES!“ liefert die wichtigsten Informationen, Organisations- und Planungshilfen für einen Auslandsaufenthalt während des Studiums. Schau dir die Infos jetzt schon an und lass dich von Correspondents - Studierende, die weltweit live von ihren Aufenthalten berichten und Tipps geben - inspirieren!

Hol dir die Infos und Inspiration auf studieren-weltweit.de und auf [instagram.com/studierenweltweit](https://www.instagram.com/studierenweltweit), [facebook.com/studierenweltweit](https://www.facebook.com/studierenweltweit), twitter.com/studieren_ww. Informationen zu allen englischsprachigen Ländern dieser Welt findest du außerdem unter: daad.de/laenderinformationen.

Eine Initiative von



DAAD