

# Motivational Letter/ Letter of Motivation

Researched from/ adapted from:

<https://novoresume.com/career-blog/how-to-write-a-motivation-letter> [Andrei Kurtuy-

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A motivational letter is a one-page letter that is used to describe ***why you are the right candidate for a certain position in a non-profit organization, or on a non-profit basis company.*** It is usually attached to your CV/resume. Here is when it is used:

You are required to write a motivational letter in these 4 specific scenarios...

1. *You are applying to get admitted to an **educational program** at a college or university (undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate).*
2. *You are applying to work at a **non-profit organization**.*
3. *You are applying as a **volunteer** in an organization.*
4. *You're applying for an **internship** in a company.*

The motivational letter should not be confused with a **cover letter**, the purpose of which is to highlight how specific information on your resume matches a job opening. Think of a cover letter as the introduction to your resume for a hiring manager and your **motivational letter** as the powerful closing **sales pitch** for a university or non-profit organisation.

So why exactly does the motivational letter matter? You are a doer more than a talker: you have listed everything there is to know about you on your resume. That should be enough, right? **Wrong!**

All organizations are looking for people who genuinely want to be there and are excited about what they do. The **intent** should be your **driving motivation!**

Writing a good motivational letter can be an absolute game-changer. It can provide a boost for your resume, but also make up for lacking required skills.

# **How to Structure a Motivational Letter**

A good motivational letter is one page where you introduce yourself, your story, and show your interest in the position or organization you are applying to.

There are two main ways to structure your motivational letter:

1. Using the classic 3 main paragraph structure, where your motivational letter has the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.
2. Using the 5-7 paragraph structure, where you divide your main body paragraph into smaller 1-3 sentence paragraphs according to the main points.

If you want to be more factual and to the point, go for the 7-paragraph structure. This way, you can use each body paragraph to discuss specific achievements or points.

If, on the other hand, you are going for a more narrative approach, then use the 3 paragraph option, so as not to break the flow of the narrative.

## **EXAMPLE:**

Below is Jane's letter to the admissions team of Harvard University. She is applying for a Ph.D. in the department of Political Science.

The **general requirements are**: being research inclined, a demonstrated passion for Politics, and an above average performance during undergraduate studies.

The values of the university are integrity, education,

respect, and accountability. She's using the **three paragraph** structuring method.

You can see how she highlights through personal stories:

- That she knows the history of the university and **shares the same values**
- That she's genuinely excited and passionate about the program and the school
- What her qualifications are and how they'll be a **great fit** for the program
- What she **hopes to achieve** if given the opportunity to study at TUDRESDEN

The same rules and spirit apply to non-university related motivational letters as well.

You can easily notice that Jane has essentially given a personal story of all her qualifications. After reading this letter, the admissions team will feel like they know Jane, and this is what you should also aim to do: communicate who you are through highlighting your story tailored to the institution and program you are applying for.

# Structuring a Motivation letter

## 1. Contact Details

Jane Doe  
Ph.D. Candidate

To  
Marie Williams, Ph.D.  
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Department of Political Science at  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, MA 02138, United States  
July 10 – 2019

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Colorado, United States   
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Dear Professor Marie Williams,

I am writing to express my interest in the doctoral program in the Department of Political Science at Harvard University, as it has always been my age-long ambition to become a political advisor to the President of the United States of America.

Thanks to the swift progress of my Bachelors and Masters degrees, it is glaring that studying and doing research are endeavours I would like to engage in even more. While studying for my BSc in Behavioural Psychology at Yale University, I developed a keen interest in the interaction between individuals and their environment and I found this very intriguing and exciting, specifically its influence in World politics today. After my Bachelors, I pursued a Master's degree in Political Communications, also at Yale University, which I completed in June 2019.

I believe that there is no better place to continue my academic career in Politics as it relates to Behavioural Psychology than the Political Science department at Harvard University. I consider it a vibrant experience to get the opportunity to meet students from all over the world and learn about their culture and values. Hence, courses like Democracy and Citizenship, Public Policy Analysis, and Management of Religious Diversity would give me more insight into how politics is affected in the world today by many other factors aside Behavioural Psychology. Considering the pedigree as well as the content of the Master's degree in Political Science at Yale University, combined with the knowledge I have garnered from my previous studies, I am confident that this Ph.D. brings me a step closer to my goal of becoming a political Advisor to the President of the United States. I believe that I am very diligent and a highly motivated student; while studying my Bachelors and my Masters, I did not fail any exam or fail to turn in any due assignment. I am certain to push through with the dedication I have always worked with to accomplish my goals and gain more knowledge and insight into political science. I developed an intense interest in politics from my experience in working with the [party name] at [party address], a political party in *country name*. Here, I attended meetings, determine political campaigning activities, designed accurate slogans and texts for campaign purposes and devoted myself offline and online political campaigning.

Studying Political Science at Harvard University is an opportunity I would love to dedicate myself too wholeheartedly, and I hope that during my stay in Boston, Massachusetts, I will be able to contribute to the community in the best way that I can. Considering my academic performance so far and my desire to enrich mine and others' knowledge in political science, I am convinced that I will be a valuable addition to the program. I hope to be given a chance, as I am confident that I am capable of meeting and even exceeding your expectations.

Thank you for considering my application.

Yours sincerely,  
Jane Doe

## 2. Intro

- Personal information
- What/Where are you applying to
- Why are you applying?

## 3. Body

- Story behind your achievement
- Be as factual as possible
- Show off your achievements using metrics (when possible)

## 4. Conclusion

- Mention future plans
- Thank the reader and conclude

Whatever structure you use, it should consist of 3 main parts: **the introduction, body, and conclusion**. Here is what to include in each one:

**Introduction: A short, engaging introduction/ pitch about yourself and why you are applying. Here, you can include:**

- Personal information. Who are you and what do you do?
- What are you applying for? Where?
- An intro to the bulk of your letter. Mention the general reason on why you're applying... then deep-dive in the bulk of your motivational letter.
- Dear **[Name of The Contact Person or Dear Madam/Sir],**
- My name is **[Your name]** and I would like to express my interest in applying for the Doctoral program in political science at **[University Name]**. I've always dreamed of becoming a politician and helping give back to my country, and I believe that a Ph.D. in politics from **[University Name]** would set me miles ahead to reaching my goal.

**Body of the Motivational Letter:** this is the main bulk of your motivational letter. This is **where you really sell yourself, mentioning stories behind your achievements, skills, and passion for whatever you are applying for.**

Try to be as factual as possible - anyone that frequently reads motivational letters can tell made-up stories from the real ones. When possible, you can also use metrics (dates/ times/ good grade numbers)) to back up your qualifications.

**Things/ Phrases You Can Mention in Your Motivational Letter:**

- My passion for \_ started when \_.
- I want to \_\_ because\_\_.
- I have been part of \_\_ for \_\_ months/years. It's the best thing for me because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I remember once when I \_\_\_\_\_, which made me realize that I \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ resonates with me because\_\_\_\_\_.
- What distinguishes me from my peers is\_\_\_\_\_.

*Practical Example:*

I developed my passion for Online Marketing during my internship at **[company name]**. Working in a small startup allowed me to get surface-level experience in most digital marketing channels. Now, I would like to deep-dive and gain advanced know-how by attending the **[university name]** program in Digital Marketing.

**Conclusion:** Finally, you can wrap up the motivational letter and send it in. In this section, you can:

- Briefly summarize your main points - “*I believe I'd be a good fit for the program because of\_\_*”
- Mention your overarching goal - “*I'd love to be a part of\_\_\_\_\_, as it would allow me to\_\_\_.* ”
- Thank the reader and conclude the motivational letter.

# **How to Write a Motivational Letter**

So how do you write a motivational letter that stands out from the pool of applicants? The way to avoid generalizations and add depth to your motivational letter is by tailoring it to the specific organization and program/position you are applying to:

1. When writing a motivational letter, you want to make sure you know what and where you are applying to. Find out who is in charge of deciding your case and **address them directly** in your opening remarks as, for example, "**Dear Mrs. Smith**". Alternatively, **Dear Sir/ Madam** is fine should you not know who will be processing your application
2. Look at the **program requirements** and the institution's website. Find out the top three requirements for the position and explain how you are the best candidate.
3. **Demonstrate that you share the organization's values or are exceptionally qualified through a short story or personal examples. Be specific.**
4. Your motivational letter should demonstrate that you really want to be there! There is a fine line between pleading and showing **intelligent interest** while also selling yourself. State specific reasons, demonstrate knowledge and express passion for applying to the institution or organization without showing off or begging.
5. **DO NOT LIE!** If you write anything even slightly untrue, your reader will sense it. Unconsciously, we inflate feelings and ideas when we lie. So be aware.

## Questions to Answer in Your Motivational Letter

*What attracted you to this specific organization or program?*

- *I would love to live in [location of organization], because\_\_\_\_\_.*
- *It is my dream to be part of [name of program], because\_\_\_\_\_.*

*What are the values the institution is based on and how do you share them?*

- The values [name of institution] is based on are: [three general values stated on their website]. I have demonstrated \_\_\_\_\_ because I have especially in \_\_\_. I also practice \_\_\_\_\_ in my professional or working life by \_\_\_\_\_.

*What kind of applicants are usually admitted to the program and why do you fulfill the requirements?*

- **Requirement:** Minimum 2 years of volunteering experience

I volunteered in Swahililand for three years. It is one of my most fulfilling experiences because I am passionate about helping others and came out a better person. I would do it again in a heartbeat.

- **Requirement:** Passionate about research

I would pick a sleepless night conducting research instead of a night out anytime. I spend most of my mornings reading the last edition of the Journal of Marketing. I have worked on three separate research studies during my time at Oxford University.

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**For cover letters see advice section in**  
**www.monster.co.uk**