

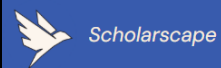


Mastering Your Application

CV and Motivation Letter Essentials for Germany

Grad Goals Webinar

Suhasini Rajan
17.05.2026



An effective CV for an application to a German University will include:

- **Personal details**
- **Education**
- **Research experience**
- **Work experience**
- **Publications, posters (Optional)**
- **Skills**
- **Extracurriculars**
- **Certifications**

For an effective CV

Personal details

- Name
- Contact details – Email
- Nationality
- Photo (Professional)

Education

- Degrees
- University
- Thesis titles, Supervisor
- Grades
- Relevant coursework

Research Experience

- Projects
- Lab work

Work Experience (only relevant roles)

- Teaching
- Internships
- RA/TA

Publications & Conferences (Optional)

- Original research
- Review
- Clinical report

Skills

- Technical & Analytical
- Languages & Software (Specify Levels)

Extracurriculars

Volunteering

Competitions & Awards

Certifications

Methodology

Programming

General rules

- **Tabular format**

Dates on the left and degrees/experience on the right

- **Order**

Reverse Chronological (Start from the recent experience)

- **Font**

Stick to the same font throughout (Times new roman/Arial)

- **Font size**

Title (14-16pt) and Text (11-12 pt)

- **Length**

1-2 pages

Most Important **Keep it precise and concise**

“Worked in a lab doing experiments on cell cultures to study macrophage functions.”

Instead..

“Established a primary cell-culture system and conducted viability and cytokine-secretion assays and flow-cytometry analysis for an to study macrophage functions.”

An outstanding motivation letter explains:

- Why this particular program
- Why this university
- Why you
- How it fits your long-term goals

German universities especially value clarity of purpose and realistic expectations.

A clear and logically structured letter will have the following:

Paragraph 1 — Your motivation

What sparked your interest in the field?

Avoid clichés like “I have always loved science.” Be specific.

Paragraph 2 — Your academic preparation

Show how your coursework, thesis, and research experiences prepared you.

PhD: Find common methods and techniques used in the associated labs

Paragraph 3 — Why this program

Demonstrate that you understand the curriculum, research groups, and outcomes.

Mention specific labs, professors, or modules.

PhD: Mention relevant publications from the particular group that you are applying to.

A clear and logically structured letter will have the following

Paragraph 4 — Your career goals

Clarity about post-Master's or post-PhD plans.

Explain how the program supports your trajectory.

Paragraph 5 — Your contribution (mostly PhD)

What perspectives, skills, or experiences will you bring to the academic community?

What makes a motivation outstanding?

For Master's applicants

- Show curiosity and willingness to learn
- Highlight transferable skills (analysis, communication, teamwork)

For PhD applicants

- Show familiarity with the supervisor's work
- Present a clear research interest or preliminary proposal
- Highlight publications and conference presentations

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Generic statements (“This university is world-class...”)
- Repeating your CV
- Lack of program-specific details
- Not addressing gaps
- Weak or vague career goals
- Overly long letters (1 page for Master's; 1–2 pages for PhD)

Mastering Your Application

CV and Motivation Letter Essentials for Germany

“Wer ein Warum zum Leben hat, erträgt fast jedes Wie.”

- Friedrich Nietzsche

“He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.”