



Guide to Higher Education in Europe

(VERSION 2.1)

About this Guide

Generally speaking, this guide is meant for those people who want to pursue Higher Education (Masters and/or PhD) in Europe.

Individuals who want to pursue education at other levels (e.g., Bachelors or Diploma) or even in some other country can also benefit from various sections of this guide.

The contents of this guide are generalized and people from any country or any background (Engineering Sciences, IT & computer-related, MBA & Business related, Medical, Law, Arts, Social sciences & Humanities etc) can benefit from it.

- A lot of effort has been put into preparing this guide; I hope you benefit from it.
- Well, Yes this is a fat guide ☺ (nearly 60 pages), that's because it has got almost all the information and tips that one would require for studies and admission. If you read and follow it carefully and **carry out the procedure sensibly**, then you would definitely get admission wherever you want to.
- This guide can be freely distributed as long as all the original contents are intact, and nothing has been modified or added.
- Pass this guide to all your friends and anyone else you know who can benefit from it.

I wish all of you success and happiness in your lives and request you to pray for the same for me.

This is version 2.1 of this guide. There will be a major update in version 3, do get it when it becomes available. For updates, new versions and other guides, visit:

<http://www.highereducationguide.info>

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My Introduction:

My name is Tauseef Afzal. I did my B.E. (Electrical) from University of Engineering and Technology, Taxila, Pakistan in 2002. I secured aggregate 4th position in the university and got 84% marks. After that, I started working as Design Engineer at AERO (Advanced Engineering Research Organization), where I worked for 2 years. In 2004, I got admission in Technical University Munich (TUM), Germany in MSCE.



During the time I was preparing for admission to Masters, I did a lot of research about the European education system, their universities and living in Europe, so I decided to prepare this guide so that others can benefit from this.

If you benefit from this guide, what you should do is:-

Pray for me, Help others and Serve your homeland in any way you can.

Remember that as a nation, we are very much behind the rest of the world in Technology and Education, we should help each other, inshallah one day we would be able to achieve the heights that others are enjoying right now.

Just remember the following lines by a Pakistani professor, “I know that my place is dirty and may have many problems in it. People there try to interfere in my business; but I don’t know! I will go back there, as its mine! It made me strong and beautiful as I am now. So its weaknesses do not matter. I will support it to live long.”

You do have a responsibility that is to serve your homeland, as whatever you are right now or whatever you might become in the future, it would only be because of your homeland. So you must return the favor in any way you can.

Contributing Financially:

If you have benefited from this guide, kindly contribute for a good cause. Contribute what ever amount you can.

Please Pay via PayPal, Click here now to donate

OR

Make your cheques payable to: **Tauseef Afzal. Account No: 17545-0**

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Send your cheques, money orders or cash to the following address:

Tauseef Afzal. c/o House No. 129, Street No. 20, F-10/2, Islamabad, Pakistan.

If you want to contribute through some other means (e.g., credit card, cash etc), kindly email me at: **tauseef_afzal@hotmail.com**

How to Contact Me:

You can contact me through my email address **tauseef_afzal@hotmail.com**

If you want to contribute to this guide or would like to add some useful information or links, kindly email me, and mention it in the subject of the email.

I have discussed almost all the things in detail in this guide, so there should be no questions concerning things mentioned in this guide.

The Guide

➤ WHEN TO GO FOR MASTERS?



This is the question that most students studying at the Bachelors level ask and think about i.e., whether to go for Masters right after completing their Bachelors or whether after doing job for sometime. Well, the answer is that there is no particular generalized RIGHT time. It depends on your own will, your circumstances and also on when you get the chance. Each of these two approaches has its own benefits.

- If one wants to go right after his Bachelors, then the plus point of this approach is that it would be comparatively easier for him to study as he would be in that studying routine.
- On the other hand, if one starts doing a job after completing his bachelors and plans to go for Masters after 2 or 3 years, then the plus point of this approach is that he would have acquired practical knowledge and would have seen the things in action that he had studied. However, it is recommended that in this case, the plan shouldn't be delayed too much, i.e., one should go for Masters after at most 2 or 3 years. The more delay there is, more are the disadvantages that one might face.

So you should decide (about when to go for Masters) yourself keeping in mind your mood, your circumstances and your future plans. As I say, do what suits you.

➤ SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN EUROPE

European countries are social welfare states; therefore education is free in most of the European countries. In most of the European universities, there is no tuition fee, however in some cases, there might be some fees of student unions, social security funds or registration fee but these are very less. All the universities are state-funded; this is from where they cover up all their expenses. The industries also contribute a lot to research and provide funding. Note however, that a very few universities do charge regular tuition fees and other charges.

A few years ago, the higher education in most of the European countries was in their native language. Now almost all the top universities conduct higher education in English. If a program is termed as **International**, then all of its courses would be in English, which is normally the case for most Masters programs. However, still a few universities conduct courses in their native language.

The study programs are available in all the fields including Engineering Sciences, IT, MBA & Business related, Medical, Law, Social sciences & Humanities etc.

The duration of masters in most of the European countries is two years, except in Sweden where it is 1.5 years and in U.K it is of one year duration. However, in U.K the education is

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not free. More detail about education in UK is given later in a separate section. The two year period consists of 4 semesters with exams at the end of each semester. Normally one has to take 5 courses per semester. The last semester is usually dedicated to the thesis.

The universities are very good and so are the faculties and the environment. The universities are very well equipped containing high-tech buildings, labs and class-rooms. Also there are lots of huge libraries containing thousands of books and other material.

➤ MAJOR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The major European countries are given below, along with their flags, websites, languages, currencies and country codes:

Country	Flag	Official Website	Languages	Currency	Country Code	Time
Germany		http://www.deutschland.de	German	Euro (€)	+49	GMT+1
Sweden		http://www.sweden.se	Swedish, English	Krona (SEK)	+46	GMT+1
Denmark		http://www.denmark.dk	Danish, English	Krone (DKK)	+45	GMT+1
Finland		http://www.finland.fi	Finnish	Euro (€)	+358	GMT+2
Netherlands		http://www.netherlands.nl	Dutch	Euro (€)	+31	GMT+1
Belgium		http://www.belgium.be	Dutch, French	Euro (€)	+32	GMT+1
France		http://www.france.com	French	Euro (€)	+33	GMT+1
UK		http://www.i-uk.com http://www.direct.gov.uk	English	Pound (£)	+44	GMT

Note that Pakistan Standard time is GMT+5.

In France, currently most of the courses are taught in French only, so if you want to go there, you would have to learn French first.

➤ THE ADMISSION CYCLE

To start with, you should have a fair & general idea about the field you would like to study in. Do some research, consult your seniors, friends, professors, and other professionals around you, see what are your interests and what are the fields which are currently on top and which fields have good scope in coming future (future job market). As you would continue with the admission procedure, you would soon be able to decide the particular fields and programs that you want to specialize in.

During the whole admission cycle, you need to do three things: **think** (about what you want to do), **obtain enough information**, and **communicate with others** with similar experiences and intentions.

During the process you need to be very clear (1) about what you want to achieve, (2) how would you achieve it and (3) possibly alternate backup plans if the original one fails.

Following are the **steps** that you would follow for seeking admission:

- 1) Decide which program and field you want to study
- 2) Search for and short list the universities where you want to apply, which offer the program of your choice, along with their department names, research strengths and TOEFL (& GRE/GMAT) codes
- 3) Download, fill and print the application forms
- 4) Prepare customized SoP and letter of recommendations
- 5) Complete the documents required (list given in a later section)
- 6) Check that the application set is complete in all regards
- 7) Post the application (ideally well before the application deadline)
- 8) Wait for the admission results
- 9) Apply for Visa

The details of all the above things are given in subsequent sections.

KEEP IN MIND THAT YOU WOULD HAVE TO START PREPARING FOR ADMISSION AT LEAST 10-11 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR INTENDED STUDIES START, E.G., IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO START STUDIES IN AUGUST 2005, THEN YOU WOULD HAVE TO START PREPARATIONS FROM ROUND ABOUT SEPTEMBER 2004.

➤ ADMISSION PROCESS

- The admission process and dates vary from university to university. Normally the admission process continues from January to March/April. The classes start in late August or September/October. Admissions are carried out only once a year.
- A few universities require you to apply online.
- For details and dates of a particular university, see the website of that university.

- It is strongly recommended that you apply as soon as possible and well before the application deadline, as in most cases the seats are filled very early. An earlier application might give you a better chance of admission. Moreover, you will get the response earlier and would have enough time for decision or applying for Visa etc.
- Make sure that you have all the necessary documents (mark sheets, degrees, certificates, TOEFL score report etc) well in time. The list of the required documents is given below. It is strongly recommended that you prepare these documents before the start of the admission procedure.
- Also keep in mind that international mail normally takes about 7-15 days.

Since the European universities don't have any application processing fee, so it doesn't cost to apply. The only cost would be that of postage (which, in Pakistan, is approximately PK Rs. 200, if you send the application through registered mail). So apply to as many universities as possible (recommended is to apply to at least 5 universities), as the admission criteria vary vastly from university to university, year to year and also depends on the applications received. So be on the safe side and apply to 5-6 universities at least.

- **When starting applying for admission, make a separate folder for each university that you apply to, to store the admission information, related documents and subsequent correspondence. This'll help you to keep things organized and manageable.**
- **All the communication between you and the university should be proper and neatly typed or printed.**

HAVE PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE THROUGHOUT THE ADMISSION PROCESS (OR ANYTHING ELSE FOR THAT MATTER). SOMETIMES THINGS MAY NOT WORK THE WAY YOU WANT THEM TO, BUT DO NEVER LOOSE HOPE AND KEEP ON TRYING. SOONER OR LATER YOU WILL GET WHAT YOU WANT.

➤ **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

The exact documents that each university requires would differ, however in general, while applying for Masters, following are the documents (attested photocopies) that universities require you to submit along with the application:

- **Application Form (provided by the university)**
Fill the application form carefully. You would either have to *print and fill* the forms or *fill and print* the forms. It is recommended that if possible; use either computer or type-writer to fill the forms. If asked for, use your own hand-writing. Fill the application forms carefully and properly.
- **Bachelors Degree + Detailed Mark Sheets + Certificates**
- **HSSC / F.Sc / A-Level Certificates + Mark Sheets**

- **SSC / Matric / O-Level Certificates + Mark Sheets**

- **TOEFL/IELTS Score Report**

A few universities require that official Test scores (TOEFL, GRE, GMAT) be sent to them directly from ETS. You would have to arrange this on the test day as mentioned in the following section. For details and preparation of TOEFL & other tests, see the next section.

- **Your C.V (Curriculum Vitae)**

Unless you are a very big scholar or researcher, limit your C.V to two pages at max. Tips for preparing a good CV are given in a later section.

- **SoP (Statement of Purpose)**

SoP is very important for the admission procedure. Details and tips on how to prepare it and sample SoP are given in a section later on.

- **Two Letters of Recommendation by your Professors or Employer**

The contents of these letters and the recommendations matter a lot in the admission procedure, so make sure you get them from your well-reputed professors. These letters should be enclosed in properly signed and sealed envelopes. Also note that some universities might have specific format for the recommendation letters which they ask your referees to fill out, answering short answer type questions, or ranking you among the students they have taught. If this is the requirement, it would be mentioned alongside the list of documents required, follow it.

It is recommended that you get one letter from your university and one from your employer (if you are doing a job).

See the section titled “*How to prepare your Letter of Recommendations*” for tips on how to prepare these letters and a sample letter.

- **Your Photographs (passport size)**

- **Experience Certificate (in case you have done or are doing job somewhere)**

Having a professional background in the field you are applying for Masters, would help you a lot, as some universities give quite importance to the work experience in the related field.

- **You can also send your additional related documents (e.g., merit certificates, distinctions, certificates for other qualifications etc)**

Additionally, following documents may be required by some universities:

- Photocopy of your passport
- Medical Certificate
- Financial Certificate
- GMAT Score Report (in case you are applying for business related fields)
- GRE Score Report (in case the university has requirement of GRE)

Also note that if any of your degrees, mark sheets or certificates are in a language other than English, then you would also have to submit their English translations along with the photocopies of the originals.

- MAKE SURE THAT THE INFORMATION YOU PRESENT IN THE FORM OF THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS OR ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL INFO, SHOULD BE COHERENT AND SHOULD NOT CONTRADICT EACH OTHER.
- DON'T MISLEAD, DECEIVE OR PRESENT FALSE INFORMATION.
- DON'T SEND ANY UNNECESSARY AND UNRELATED DOCUMENTS.

When you make sets of photocopies of documents, letters of recommendations & SOPS etc, it is recommended that you make TWO OR THREE EXTRA SETS, as you might require them at some later stage.

➤ EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The following section covers the educational requirements that you should have in order to be eligible for admission to Masters.

✚ Bachelors Degree:

- For admission to Masters, you should (or about to) have a Bachelors degree from a recognized university in the related field for which you are applying for Masters.
- Although the exact criteria varies from university to university; but usually many universities prefer applicants who have achieved good marks & grades throughout their educational career. The applicants having achieved positions and other distinctions are obviously preferred more.
- If you have some publications or research papers in some journal or conference, it would be a great plus for your admission.
- However, this is not the case every where; students with lower grades or marks may also be admitted if they have excelled in other fields, projects and they have a strong professional career.
- Just bear in mind that if you WANT to pursue higher education and make reasonable efforts for admission and do it sensibly, then no matter whatever grades you have, you have quite good chances of getting admission wherever you wish to.
- Also keep in mind that having achieved high marks won't guarantee your admission alone, there are several other things that matter including your SOPs, letter of recommendations, C.V, TEST scores etc.

✚ TOEFL/IELTS GMAT GRE:

Almost all the universities (which teach courses in English) require that you have taken either the TOEFL or the IELTS test. Moreover, some embassies also have requirement of TOEFL for issuing VISA.

For MBA and other business related courses, GMAT is required.

For other requirements, e.g., GRE etc, see the university's website.

If your courses are not in English (but are in the native language), then there is no requirement of TOEFL or IELTS, however in that case there is a requirement that you have

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proficiency in that language and the university might require you to show some certificate or proof etc.

A few **general points** about these tests are mentioned below:

- These Tests (TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, GMAT) are **GENERAL** and the questions in these tests are not related to any particular field. These TESTS test the knowledge that has been acquired over a certain period of time and not relating to any specific field of study.
- Keep in mind that although for every type of test, there are **minimum score requirements** which you must clear, you should get as high scores as possible. This'll not only increase your chances of admission but would also help you in other things too e.g., applying for a scholarship, funding or TA ship etc.
- In order to register for any of these tests, you should have a **valid passport** (this is a special requirement for test takers from the sub-continent), so if you haven't got one yet you should get yours as soon as possible. In Pakistan, in order to get your passport, you would have to go to your regional passport office and fill up the form along with the fee (PK Rs.1500) and required documents. You will get your passport after 14 days from the date of submission of forms.
- You would have to take your passport to the test centre on the test day as proof of your identity.
- For registering for any of these tests, you would have to pay the registration fee, which you can either pay by credit card or bank draft (for making a foreign currency bank draft, contact your bank or a money changer). For other modes of payment, see the official website or the appropriate brochure of the test.
- For taking the TOEFL/GRE/GMAT tests, you would have to register with ETS (Educational Testing Service: <http://www.ets.org>).
 - ETS has started online registration, so now you can register online using a credit card.
 - Or you can also download the form (International Test Scheduling Form) from their website, fill it and fax it to the RRC (Regional Registration Centre), which for test-takers from Pakistan is in Malaysia.
 - Or you can also schedule the test appointment via telephone, for which you would have to call the RRC in Malaysia.
 - For exact details of how to register for a particular test, see the official website or the appropriate brochure of that test.
- You can take these tests only once per month i.e., if you have taken any of the tests (TOEFL/GRE/GMAT) in a particular month, then you can't take the **same** test again in that month.
- On the test day, after you have taken the test, you would have the option of sending your test (TOELF/GRE/GMAT) scores directly to up to 4-5 universities of your choice free of cost. For this you would need to know their TOEFL/GRE/GMAT codes, which you can get from the university websites, and if these are not mentioned there, email the universities to get them. For sending scores to other universities or sending scores later, you would have to pay extra fees (app 15\$ per university), so ensure that when you go to take any of these tests, you have the names and TOEFL/GRE/GMAT codes of the universities where you want your test scores to be sent.

- The test scores for any of these tests is valid for only a certain number of years (e.g., in case of TOEFL, the test scores are valid for only two years). When you apply to a university, they require that you have a **valid** test score i.e., you have taken that test in the previous 2 (in case of TOEFL) or 5 years (in case of GRE/GMAT) and not earlier than that.
- The admission procedure of most of the European universities start from January, so ensure that you have taken the required test and have your official score report (which takes app. 5-6 weeks after you have taken the test) with you by the end of December or January. Although you can also send the score report later (after applying), yet it is recommended that when you send your documents for admission, they are complete in all respect.
- In Pakistan, the test centers are located in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi.

Some portions of these tests are computer adaptive.

What is meant by a Computer Adaptive Test?

In each of these tests, one or more sections contain multiple choice questions. For each multiple-choice section of the test, there is a large pool of potential questions ranging from a low to high level of difficulty. Each section of the test starts with a question of moderate difficulty. If you answer the first question correctly, the computer will give you a harder question next. If you answer the first question incorrectly, your next question will be easier i.e., the level of difficulty of the next question varies with whether the current question has been answered correctly or not. This process will continue until you complete the section, at which point the computer will have an accurate assessment of your ability level in that section of the test i.e., a computer adaptive test automatically adjusts to your skill level.

In a computer-adaptive test, only one question at a time is presented. Because the computer scores each question before selecting the next one, you may not skip, return to, or change your responses to previous questions.

In a computer adaptive test, your score is determined by:

- the number of questions you answer
- whether you answer the questions correctly or incorrectly
- the level of difficulty and other statistical characteristics of each question; difficult questions carry more marks

The questions in an adaptive test are weighted according to their difficulty and other statistical properties, not according to their position in the test.

Tips and other useful points to be kept in mind for any of these tests are given later in the section titled **“Useful Points to be kept in mind for any of these tests”**.

Details about TOEFL, IELTS, GRE and GMAT are given below.



TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language)

TOEFL measures the English proficiency of non-native speakers of English. Most people who take the TOEFL test are planning to study at colleges and universities where instruction is in English.

For TOEFL, the normal minimum score requirement of most universities is **213**, while for some others it is **237** (out of 300, this is for Computer Based TOEFL).

TOEFL is easy and with the preparation of 3-4 weeks, you should be able to score in excess of 250. I prepared for a couple of weeks and my score was 280.

- The fee for taking the TOEFL test is 130\$.

For details and how to register, visit the TOEFL website <http://www.toefl.org> and download the TOEFL bulletin, which contains all the necessary information.

Sections of the TOEFL Test

Currently, the TOEFL test has the following four sections:-

Section	Questions	Time	Marks
<i>Tutorials</i>	<i>7 Tutorials</i>	<i>Untimed</i>	-----
Listening	30-50 Questions	40-60 mins	0-30 (scaled to 100)
Structure	20-25 Questions	15-20 mins	0-15 (scaled to 50)
5 minute Break			
Reading	44-55 Questions	70-90 mins	0-30 (scaled to 100)
Writing	1 prompt	30 mins	0-15 (scaled to 50)

When you have taken the TOEFL Test, you can view your unofficial **Listening & Reading** scores at the test center; however, because of the essay scoring process, you will not be able to view your **Writing** scores at that time. Instead you would be given a range (e.g., 230-280) in which your final total score would lie.

The various sections of the TOEFL test are described below:

- **Listening** (Multiple Choice Questions)

This section measures the ability to understand spoken English. This section tests comprehension of main ideas, supporting ideas, important details and inferences. You will both see and hear the questions before the answer choices appear. In this section, you would listen to short conversations, longer conversations & class discussions, lectures & talks and then you would have to answer the questions about what you have listened. Since this section is Computer Adaptive, so once you have confirmed your answer, you can't go back and change your answers.

- **Structure** (Multiple Choice Questions)

This section measures the ability to recognize language that is appropriate for standard written English. The language tested is formal, rather than conversational. In this section, there are two types of questions; namely *incomplete sentences* and *sentences with*

underlined words and phrases. They are presented in random order. Since this section is also Computer Adaptive, so once you have confirmed your answer, you can't go back and change your answers. The score in this section is combined with the score on the essay that you compose in the writing section.

- **Reading** (Multiple Choice Questions)

This section measures the ability to understand short passages similar in topic and style to academic texts used in colleges and universities. In this section, there would be 3-6 passages with an average of 6-10 questions after each passage. You would read the passages and then answer the questions related to them. This section is not Computer Adaptive, so you can go back (to questions related to the same passage that you are reading currently) and change your answers.

- **Writing** (No Choice)

The essay writing section demonstrates the ability to generate and organize ideas, to support those ideas with examples or evidence, and to compose in standard written English in response to an assigned topic.

For this section, you would be given a topic on which you would have to compose an essay of 3-5 paragraphs or 300-500 words. The writing topics are provided on the TOEFL website which you should download from there. The essay in the actual test comes strictly from these topics. You should discuss these topics with your friends or siblings etc. Make points in your mind on each of these topics and prepare what you would write. Most of the topics ask you to agree or disagree with a statement or to express an opinion, hence it is useful to make an opinion in advance and prepare points in favor of that opinion.

On the test day, you would have the option of either to type your essay (using computer) or to hand-write it. In case you choose to hand-write the essay, the scoring and result would take approximately 2 weeks more than in case when you type it.

A good essay must have a **good beginning** (introduction), **good comments** to support your opinion (the body) and a **good ending** that summarizes the essay.

The essay is scored on a scale of 1-6 in half point increments.

Preparing for TOEFL:

- For preparation of TOEFL, you should buy some TOEFL CDs; popular ones are Longman TOEFL, Barron's TOEFL and Kaplan's TOEFL.
- You should also download **PowerPrep TOEFL** from TOEFL's website or get it from some CD. It's the official test-preparation software.
- During preparation, you should take at least 3 or 4 **full-length timed** TOEFL tests; this would help you to evaluate yourself and would help you to pace properly.
- For the grammar section, practice various things e.g., the agreement of the Verb with the subject etc.
- You can also join some academy or institute for preparing for the Test.

Useful points to be kept in mind for taking the TOEFL Test

1. DO NEVER use blind guessing in Listening & Structure sections, as these two sections are computer adaptive and blind guessing can seriously lower your score. If, however time is very short, you may use it in the Reading section.
2. Do not try to skip questions in Listening and Structure sections, as you can't skip them and trying to do so will only result in wastage of time.

For more tips and useful points, see the section “**Useful Points to be kept in mind for any of these tests**” later.

Sending TOEFL Test Scores directly to Universities:

On the test day, you can send your official TOEFL test scores to up to four universities of your choice free of cost.

Validity of TOEFL scores:

The TOEFL scores are valid for only two years.

Next Generation TOEFL

ETS will launch **Next Generation TOEFL** from September 2005, in which the four sections would be: Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing.

You need to take either the TOEFL or the IELTS Test, not both.



IELTS (International English Language Testing System)

- For IELTS, the normal minimum score requirement of most universities is **6.0** or in some cases **6.5** (out of a score band of 1-9). Scores in IELTS are reported as half or full band.
- IELTS is owned, developed and delivered through the partnership of the British Council (<http://www.britishcouncil.org>), IDP Education Australia (<http://www.idp.com/>) and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/>).
- For detailed information about IELTS, visit <http://www.ielts.org> and download the IELTS handbook, which contains all the necessary information.
- For admissions, you would normally have to take the Academic IELTS test.
- In Pakistan, IELTS is conducted by The British Council (<http://www.britishcouncil.org>). The fee for taking the IELTS (in Pakistan) is PK Rs. 7000.

Sections of the IELTS Test

The IELTS test has the following four sections:-

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Section	Questions	Time
Listening	40 Questions	30 mins
Reading	40 Questions	60 mins
<i>Break</i>		
Writing	2 Tasks	60 mins
Speaking	3 parts	11-14 mins

These sections are described below:

- **Listening**

The Listening Module takes around 30 minutes, there are 40 questions.

In this section, the candidates listen to a number of recorded texts, which increase in difficulty as the text progresses. These include a mixture of conversations and dialogues and feature a variety of English accents and dialects.

The recording is heard only once, but candidates are given time to read the questions and record their answers.

There are a total of four sections; the first two sections are concerned with social needs, while the last two sections are concerned with situations related more closely to educational or training contexts.

- **Reading**

The Academic Reading Module takes 60 minutes, there are 40 questions.

There are three reading passages with tasks. Texts are taken from books, magazines, journals and newspapers, all written for a non-specialist audience. At least one of the texts contains a detailed logical argument. One text may contain non-verbal materials such as diagrams, graphs or illustrations. Text and tasks become increasingly difficult through the paper.

- **Writing**

The Academic Writing Module takes 60 minutes. There are two tasks to complete. For the first task; candidates write a *report of around 150 words* based on material found in a table or diagram, demonstrating their ability to describe and explain data. It is suggested that about 20 minutes be spent on task 1.

For the second task; candidates write a *short essay of around 250 words* in response to an opinion or a problem. They are expected to demonstrate an ability to discuss issues, construct an argument and use the appropriate tone and register. It is suggested that about 40 minutes be spent on task 2.

Candidates should note that scripts under the required minimum word limit are penalized.

- **Speaking**

The Speaking Module takes between 11 to 14 minutes. It consists of an oral interview between the candidates and an examiner. Candidates are assessed on their use of spoken English to answer short questions, speak at length on a familiar topic, and also to ask questions and interact with the examiner.

There are three parts:

In **Part 1**, the candidates answer general questions about themselves, their homes/families, their jobs/studies, their interests, and a range of similar familiar topic areas. This part lasts 4-5 minutes.

In **Part 2**, the candidate is given a verbal prompt on a card and is asked to talk on a particular topic. The candidate has one minute to prepare before speaking at length, for between one and two minutes. The examiner then asks one or two rounding-off questions.

In **Part 3**, the examiner and candidate engage in a discussion of more abstract issues and concepts which are thematically linked to the topic prompt in part 2. The discussion lasts 4-5 minutes.

Preparing for IELTS:

- Training material for the preparation of the IELTS test can be purchased from your nearest test centre or directly from Cambridge ESOL (<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/>) or IDP Education Australia (<http://www.idp.com/>).
- The IELTS Specimen Material pack, which includes two booklets, a CD and sample answers, is available from offices of [The British Council](http://www.britishcouncil.org/) at PK Rs 975 a pack. The British Council also offers a one-day introduction course and a 30-hour IELTS preparation workshop for students interested in familiarizing themselves with the IELTS exam and improving their IELTS band. For details, see the website of The British Council (<http://www.britishcouncil.org/>).
- For preparation of IELTS, you can buy some IELTS CDs or books along with cassettes; popular books are **Cambridge IELTS 1,2,3** and **Insight into IELTS The Cambridge Course**.
- The last section of the test is **Speaking**, for which you should be able to speak fluent English. For this, practice speaking English and interviewing with your friends or siblings. The more you speak, the more command you would be able to get.
- A useful website for information and preparation of IELTS is <http://www.infoielts.com/>
- During preparation, you should take at least 3 or 4 **full-length timed** IELTS tests; this would help you to evaluate yourself and would help you to pace properly.
- You can also join some academy or institute for preparing for the Test.

Useful points to be kept in mind for taking the IELTS Test

1. The listening part usually has audio transcripts of people from Australia and England, their accents might not be very familiar as we are normally used to American accent, so practice listening and apprehending all sorts of accents.
2. Face the interviewer in the Speaking section with confidence and speak

fluently.

For more tips and useful points, see the section “**Useful Points to be kept in mind for any of these tests**” given later.

Validity of IELTS scores:

The IELTS scores are valid for two years.



GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)

A few universities require that you have taken the GRE test. A few others although not require GRE explicitly, yet they prefer applicants who have taken the GRE test.

If you have already taken the GRE test, then it would be a great plus point for admission.

If you wish to apply to a university which requires GRE, make sure that you have taken or would take the GRE test in time.

- GRE is a general test required by universities for admission into Graduate programs.
- GRE Test is computer adaptive.
- The fee for taking the GRE test is 140\$ (175\$ for test takers from China).
- For more information on GRE, visit <http://www.gre.org> and download the GRE Information Bulletin.

Keep in mind, that right now only a few European universities require GRE, however this number is increasing every year, and it is quite possible that in a few years time quite a large number of universities would be requiring GRE.

Sections of the GRE Test

The GRE test has the following three sections:-

Section	Questions	Time	Scores
Analytical Writing	2 Tasks	75 mins	0-6
Verbal	30 Questions	30 mins	0-800
Quantitative	28 Questions	45 mins	0-800

If you take the computer-based Test, you can view your unofficial **Verbal** and **Quantitative** scores at the test center; however, because of the essay scoring process, you will not be able to view your **Analytical Writing** scores at that time.

The various sections of the GRE test are described below:

- **Analytical Writing**

The Analytical Writing section measures the following skills:

- articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively
- examine claims and accompanying evidence

- support ideas with relevant reasons and examples
- sustain a well-focused, coherent discussion
- control the elements of standard written English

In this section, there are 2 writing Tasks; a 45-minute “*Present Your Perspective on an Issue*” task and a 30-minute “*Analyze an Argument*” task.

The “*Issue*” task states an opinion on an issue of general interest and asks you to address the issue from any perspectives you wish, as long as you provide relevant reasons and examples to explain and support your views.

The “*Argument*” task presents a different challenge — it requires you to critique an argument by discussing how well reasoned you find it.

- **Verbal** (Multiple Choice Questions)

The Verbal section measures the following skills:

- analyze & evaluate written material and synthesize information obtained from it
- analyze relationships among component parts of sentences
- recognize relationships between words and concepts

There are 30 questions in this section. These include *Analogies* (7 Qs), *Sentence Completion* (6 Qs), *Antonyms* (9 Qs) and *Reading Comprehension* (3 Qs).

Since this section is Computer Adaptive, so once you have confirmed your answer, you can't go back and change your answers.

- **Quantitative** (Multiple Choice Questions)

The Quantitative section measures the following skills:

- understand basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis
- reason quantitatively
- solve problems in a quantitative setting

There are 28 questions in this section. These include *Mathematical comparisons* (14 Qs), *Problem Solving* (10 Qs), and *Chart* (4 Qs).

Since this section is also Computer Adaptive, so once you have confirmed your answer, you can't go back and change your answers.

Preparing for GRE:

- Good books for preparing for GRE are **Cracking GRE**, **GRE Big Book** and **Barron's Guide for GRE preparation**.
- You should start preparing for the test at least 6 months before. Build a time table and give in 1.5-2 hours daily for the first 2 months, 3 hours for the 3rd and 4th month and 6-7 hours for the last 2 months. Try to give one hour more on Sundays. If you are not able to give in the time that I mentioned, try to make up in the following week or on a holiday.
- If you want to secure more than 700 in the verbal section, you have to memorize the "Barron's" vocabulary section. 95% of the words that come in the actual GRE test come from "Barron's".
- The wordlist that you should prepare from is “**Barron’s 3500 Master word list**”.

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For preparation, don't start from list 1 and try to memorize all words. This probably will not take you further than 7-8 lists. Instead, the right way is to start from list 1 (you will later need to make many passes over the complete 50 lists). Memorize the words which are either already familiar to you or associated to some word that you know. With very ordinary effort, you will be able to memorize anything between 20 to 45 words from each list of 70 words. Go over all the lists in similar manner. By now you would have mastered about 45% of 3500 words. In the next pass over the wordlists, start at list 1, use the same strategy but now you will be able to relate and memorize many more words. In the third pass, concentrate on the remaining words in each list, which are completely new to you.

- To study vocabulary, it is very helpful (though time consuming) to read a good dictionary, to know the many connotations of the word. Keep writing the meanings of each word on the Barron's list. Always read the synonyms of the word as given in the Barron's list, because these are the words that improve your vocabulary a lot.
- When you are preparing for the test, start by doing the Peterson's book and Barron's word list simultaneously. Then move on the Arco's book and Barron's word list simultaneously. When you have finished all of these books (by the 3rd month), start timing yourself and appear for the practice tests. Do the Big Book tests first for a month and then move on to doing the Barron's tests, Arco's and Peterson's test. Give the Kaplan test about a week before the final test. Add about 100 marks to what ever you get in that test and that will roughly be the mark that you can expect for the final exam. Finally about 2 days before the final exam, appear for the practice CDs from ETS.
- For the Quantitative section, practice math (Permutation/combination, probability, mean/median/mode...etc.) for 6 months on a regular basis. Practice all the sums at least 2 times from the list of books and cds that I mentioned above.
- For the analytical writing section, write as many essays as you possibly can. Unfortunately you cannot build on your essay writing skills so fast but what you can do is to make sure that you do not make any grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. Start your essay with some eye catching introduction e.g., some story/quotation/experience etc. Write small clear sentences. Do not try to put in flashy words or sentences unless you are dead sure that it is the right word. Try to get your essays corrected, not all though, only a few but on different topics by someone appropriate and try and learn from the mistakes that you made.
- The most important point is **Don't Panic**. Even if you see that your scores are not improving greatly or you are not learning a lot, stick in there. Don't give up and you will eventually succeed. Don't ever panic even in the exam. If the set of words for you are tough, the marking will be easy. So just try staying there. You will make it.
- You can also join some academy or institute for preparing for the Test.

For tips and useful points, see the section “**Useful Points to be kept in mind for any of these tests**” given later.

Sending Official GRE scores directly to Universities:

On the test day, you can send the official GRE Test Scores free of cost directly to up to four universities.

Validity of GRE scores:

The GRE scores are valid for five years.



GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)

If you are applying for a business related program, then you need to have taken the GMAT Test.

- The GMAT is a standardized assessment that helps business schools (& universities) assess the qualifications of applicants for advanced study in business and management. The GMAT measures basic **verbal, mathematical, and analytical writing skills** that have been developed over a long period of time during education and work.
- The GMAT score range is from 200 to 800.
- The fee for taking the GMAT test is 225\$.
- For more information on GMAT, visit Mba.com (<http://www.mba.com>) or GMAT.org (<http://www.gmat.org>)

Sections of the GMAT Test

The GMAT test has the following three sections:-

Section	Questions	Time	Scores
Analytical Writing Assessment	2 Tasks	60 mins	0-6
<i>Optional 5 minutes Break</i>			
Quantitative	37 Questions	75 mins	0-60
<i>Optional 5 minutes Break</i>			
Verbal	41 Questions	75 mins	0-60

When you have taken the Test, you can view your unofficial **Quantitative** and **Verbal** scores at the test center; however, because of the essay scoring process, you will not be able to view your **Analytical Writing Assessment** scores at that time.

The various sections of the GMAT test are described below:

- **Analytical Writing Assessment**
The AWA consists of two separate writing tasks—*Analysis of an Issue* and *Analysis of an Argument*. You are allowed 30 minutes to complete each one.
- **Quantitative** (Multiple Choice Questions)
This section tests elementary mathematical skills. This section contains 37 multiple-

choice questions of two question types—*Data Sufficiency* and *Problem Solving*. You will be allowed a maximum of 75 minutes to complete the entire section. Since this section is Computer Adaptive, so once you have confirmed your answer, you can't go back and change your answers.

- **Verbal** (Multiple Choice Questions)

This section contains 41 multiple choice questions of three question types—*Reading Comprehension*, *Critical Reasoning*, and *Sentence Correction*. You are allowed a maximum of 75 minutes to complete the entire section. Since this section is also Computer Adaptive, so once you have confirmed your answer, you can't go back and change your answers.

Preparing for GMAT:

- Read about the format of the GMAT. (See the articles under the heading “What Is the GMAT?” in the [Take the GMAT](#) section of [Mba.com](#))
- From [Mba.com](#) download and use the free GMAT POWERPREP Test Preparation Software so that you can become familiar with the format used in the actual GMAT test.
- Review the types of questions on the GMAT by looking at sample questions for each section of the test. (Read the [Mba.com](#) articles on the Analytical Writing Assessment Section, Verbal Section, and Quantitative Section.)
- To study for the Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) section of the GMAT, practice writing an essay on some of the topics in the complete list of AWA essay topics, downloadable from [Mba.com](#).
- You should do a review of basic math skills.
- Review and study one section of the test at a time.
- Allow for at least five-six weeks of studying before taking the test.
- You can also join some academy or institute for preparing for the Test.

For tips and useful points, see the section “Useful Points to be kept in mind for any of these tests” given later.

Sending Official GMAT scores directly to Universities:

On the test day, you can send your GMAT Test scores to up to five universities/institutions of your choice free of cost.

Validity of GMAT scores:

The GMAT scores are valid for five years.

➤ **USEFUL POINTS TO BE KEPT IN MIND FOR ANY OF THESE TESTS**

Following are some of the points that you should keep in mind while preparing and taking any of the above mentioned tests (or in general any other test).

1. Know well about the test e.g., the test format, scoring criteria, score you must achieve, how to prepare for the test etc.
2. Prepare well and regularly for the test. Preparing for 2-3 hours each day for 1-2 months is much better than preparing only for 5 or 6 full days.
3. Practice all the sections of the test well and regularly.
4. During preparation, take the sample tests preferably in a timed manner.
5. If you are planning to appear in a certain test, it is strongly recommended to get in touch with a person who has already taken that test to get to know the useful tips or likely problems one can encounter during the test.
6. The night before the test, get plenty of sleep and make sure you have everything you will need to bring to the test center.
7. Try not to be nervous. You'll be able to focus better if you're calm—and you'll be calm if you arrive at the test center rested, prepared, knowing what to expect, and armed with some solid test-taking strategies.
8. Carefully read all the directions presented at the start of the test or during the test.
9. Read each question and all the answer choices carefully before answering.
10. Do never use Blind Guessing in computer adaptive sections of the test, as this can seriously lower your score.
11. Don't try to skip questions in computer adaptive sections of the test, as you can't skip them and trying to do so will only result in wastage of time.
12. During the test, CONCENTRATE only on the current section of the test.
13. Pace yourself properly during the test keeping in mind the time elapsed, the time remaining and number of questions remaining.
14. During the test, manage the time properly; do not spend too much time on any one question. MOVE ON so as to give yourself sufficient time to answer each question.
15. Do not panic. Relax.
16. If you don't know the answer to a question, use INTELLIGENT GUESSING i.e., First eliminate the wrong answers, and then guess.
17. If there is a break between various sections of the test, use it efficiently to take rest and to recompose yourself.

➤ **FINDING & SELECTING UNIVERSITIES**

There is no specific ranking of European universities (unlike that of US universities). Most of the universities are of equal level and standard, however they differ in the programs they offer and because of their departments and faculties.

The universities where you wish to apply depend on your choice of program that you wish to pursue. Select the universities that offer your desired program. It depends also on the courses they offer and the professors/teachers they have in their faculty, so your choice for a particular university should take into account the factors like:

- 1. The program that you wish to pursue**
- 2. Course Content (courses offered by the university in that program)**
- 3. Faculty and Research profiles of the professors in that department**
- 4. Collaboration & linkage of the university with the industry and facilities offered by the concerned department**
- 5. Location of the university and Job & financial conditions in that city/country (if you plan to meet your expenses by doing a part time job)**

The usual country-wise preference list that most people recommend is:

- 1. Germany**
- 2. Sweden**
- 3. Denmark**
- 4. Finland**
- 5. Netherlands, Belgium**

However, it is not a strict list, you should choose according to your own requirements and preferences.

For finding the university websites, you can use the following links:

- Google: <http://www.google.com/>
- [Google's Directory Listing of Colleges & Universities in Europe](#)
- [Yahoo's Directory Listing of Universities](#)
- Academic Ranking of World Universities: <http://ed.sjtu.edu.cn/ranking.htm>
- BrainTrack: <http://www.braintrack.com/>
- Grad School Search Guide: <http://www.gradschools.com/>
- World wide Colleges & Universities: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/globaled/wwcu/>
- A Searchable Database for Universities Worldwide: <http://univ.cc/>
- StudyOverseas: <http://www.studyoverseas.com/>
- List of Universities offering EE & Computer Engineering Programs:
<http://www.ece.umn.edu/links/schools/>
- List of Computer Science Departments Across the Web:
<http://www.cs.haverford.edu/CS-Departments.html>
- BusinessWeek's Business School Rankings:
<http://www.businessweek.com/bschools/03/geographic.htm>

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For finding universities in **Germany**, you can use the following links:

- <http://www.daad.de/deutschland/en/>
- <http://www.campus-germany.de/english/1.html>
- <http://www.higher-education-compass.de>
- <http://www-en.studienwahl.de/fmg.htm>
- <http://www.uni-flensburg.de/sesam/agep.edu/index.html>
- Stern-CHE Universities Ranking: <http://www.university-ranking.de>

For finding universities in **Sweden**, use the following links:

- <http://katalogen.sunet.se/cat/education/universities>
- <http://www.studyinsweden.se>
- National Agency for Higher Education: <http://www.hsv.se/en>

For finding universities in **Denmark**, use the following link:

- Danish Ministry of Education Official Website on International Education in English: <http://www.ciriusonline.dk/eng/?Id=421>

For finding universities in **Finland**, use the following link:

- CIMO (Centre for International Mobility): <http://finland.cimo.fi/>

The admission procedure and all other related details are mentioned on the university's website. You would have to download and print the forms, or in some cases there would be an online application procedure.

Also note down the TOEFL/GRE/GMAT codes of these universities where you intend to apply as you might have to send test scores to these universities directly from ETS. If you don't find these codes on the university website, email them to get it.

Note that few of the university's websites may be in languages other than English, however in most cases there would be a link to the English version. Click on that (either a text link or a British Flag) and you should be able to get the information you need.

In case the website or a specific page is not available in English, use the translation softwares or translation websites, few links are given below.

Translation among various Languages

- Langenberg: <http://translation.langenberg.com/>
- FreeTranslation: <http://www.freetranslation.com/>
- AltaVista BabelFish: <http://babelfish.altavista.com/>
- Google Translation: http://www.google.com/language_tools

➤ **LIST OF TOP-RATED EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES**

A few of the well-known and top-rated European universities are mentioned below, along with links to their websites.

University	Country	Website	TOEFL Code
Technical University Munchen (Munich) TUM	Germany	http://www.tum.de/	7806
RWTH Aachen	Germany	http://www.rwth-aachen.de/	
Technical University Hamburg-Harburg (TUHH)	Germany	http://www.tuhh.de/index_e.html	8165
University of Stuttgart	Germany	http://www.uni-stuttgart.de/	8174
University of ULM	Germany	http://www.uni-ulm.de/	
University of Duisburg Essen	Germany	http://www.uni-duisburg.de/	
University of Keil	Germany	http://www.uni-kiel.de/	
Chalmers University of Technology	Sweden	http://www.chalmers.se/	0050
Royal Institute of Technology – KTH, Stockholm	Sweden	http://www.kth.se/eng/	7966
Linköpings Universitet	Sweden	http://www.liu.se/en	0101
Lund University	Sweden	http://www.lu.se/lu/	0089
Göteborgs University	Sweden	http://www.gu.se/English/	0083
Technical University of Denmark (DTU)	Denmark	http://www.dtu.dk/index_e.htm	1684
Aalborg University	Denmark	http://www.auc.dk/english/	
Helsinki University of Technology (HUT)	Finland	http://www.hut.fi/English/	0053
Tampere University of Technology (TUT)	Finland	http://www.tut.fi/	0599
TU DELFT	Holland	http://www.tudelft.nl/	
University of Twente	Holland	http://www.utwente.nl/en/	
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven	Belgium	http://www.kuleuven.ac.be/	
Budapest University of Technology and Economics	Hungary	http://www.bme.hu/en/	
NTNU - Norwegian University of Science and Technology	Norway	http://www.ntnu.no/indexe.php	
University of Oslo, Norway	Norway	http://www.uio.no/english/	

As mentioned previously, in addition to your Bachelors degree and Tests (TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, GMAT), you need to prepare certain other documents. The following sections provide details and useful tips for preparing these documents.

➤ HOW TO PREPARE YOUR C.V (CURRICULUM VITAE)

Your Curriculum Vitae/resume is an essential document that represents yourself. It is a summary of your career history and the skills and experiences you have gained during the course of it. It speaks of your educational and professional background as well as the achievements you have made. Maybe it would be the first document that the admission committee would look at, while accessing your application, so prepare it well.

A good Resume should attract attention, create a positive impression and present your relevant skills and qualities clearly and concisely. It should be neat, well-organized and complete.

What your CV should contain

Your CV should contain the sections described below in the order they are mentioned. If a section is not related to you, don't include it.

- **Objective Statement**

You can give a one or two line statement mentioning your objectives and what you aspire. This'll give your reader a general idea of your area of expertise. Put some thought in thinking and writing this objective statement.

- **Personal Information**

This section should contain your name, date of birth, nationality (optional) and contact details (email, phone number and address).

Your name should stand out. Make it 2 font sizes larger than everything else. For example, if you are using 12 point font size for your resume (which is preferred) write your name in the 14 point font size. You can also use all upper case letters and/or boldface type for your name.

- **Work Experience & Jobs**

This section should contain your Work experience, Professional Positions that you have held and any Projects that you have worked on or have been part of. Starting with your present position, list the title of every job you have done, along with the name of the company, the city, and the years you worked there and your duty. Describe your work experience in short sentences using straightforward, positive language. As well as describing the job, describe what did you contributed in all your previous jobs and point out any general qualities that arose from the work such as ability to manage staff or work to tight deadlines etc.

You can also add any internships that you have done in this section.

- **Professional Skills**

This section should list your professional skills e.g., if you are a programmer, then your IT related skills e.g., in what languages (VisualC, C#, Matlab etc) you expertise in. Also list your other computer-related expertise.

- **Educational & Academic Record**

This section should contain your education and academic record. Starting from the most recent degree, list brief details of qualifications – Bachelors Degree, HSSC, SSC (or equivalents) - along with marks/grades attained. You may make different categories in it depending on your qualification and degree e.g., you might add a “**Courses or Subjects**” section, highlighting the main courses and subjects that you have studied.

- **Distinctions/Awards**

This section should contain any distinctions or awards that you have achieved during education or professional work. You can also mention distinctions achieved in co-curricular activities.

- **Membership in Professional Associations**

Here you can list your memberships of any professional associations that you have e.g., P.E.C or IEE etc.

- **Professional Activities & Projects**

In this section list all the projects you started, neat things you did, committee memberships you held (e.g., departmental committees; they count), in-service training programs you conducted, important guest lectures you presented, etc.

- **Papers Presented & Publications**

Here you can list the papers that you have presented or any publications that you have made as an individual or as being part of a team. You can also mention the various seminars and conferences you might have attended, but be specific and relevant.

- **Professional References**

Here you can mention the names and contact details of two or three references who will speak very highly of you. List and number each referees, give their name, title, and contact. If you have done job somewhere, then one of the referees should be your most recent employer. Graduates and people with limited work experience can nominate college lecturers, teachers or managers during work experience. Be sure to tell your referees in advance, so they will be prepared and ask the person before you include his or her name in your CV as referee, if it is OK to do so.

If you prefer, you can also leave out the names of the referees, instead write something like “References can be provided on request”.

Tips for preparing a better CV

Ensuring your CV is well presented and easy to follow is as important as including all the relevant information. Following are a few tips for preparing a professional looking CV:

1. Decide for what purpose you are preparing your CV (e.g., for admission or for a job) and then tailor it accordingly.
2. Your CV should be simple, concise, clear and tidy with all the information easy to find.
3. Keep it to the point and concentrate on the quality of your achievements, not the quantity.
4. The information should be categorized under clear headings (as mentioned above) highlighted in bold or capitals. Put dates on the left-hand side and indent information so that all the information is easily readable. Moreover, put the important and relevant information near to the top of your CV.
5. Don't over burden the document with detail that is unimportant. Also don't include such items as religion, hobbies or items of that kind. They are unnecessary and unprofessional.
6. Use appropriate Keywords (e.g., Java, Matlab, .NET or other keywords depending on your field and expertise). Keywords are very important. They may be your Skills, Major Companies and even Universities.
7. The style of presentation should be consistent throughout the CV, both within a section and between sections.
8. Use a confident tone and positive language. Concentrate on your achievements and not on your responsibilities. This means listing things you have done and not rewriting your job description.
9. Don't include your photo unless you have been specifically asked for one.
10. Don't lie or present any kind of wrong information.
11. Check thoroughly for incorrect spellings and grammar mistakes.
12. Revise your CV several times; also have others (e.g., your friends or co-workers) go through it before you finalize your CV.

A useful approach is to keep a CV development file. (If you aren't keeping any kind of files yet, start one now). Throw notes into this file regarding the kinds of things you are doing on your assistantships, special talks you gave, activities you performed that were noteworthy, committee assignments, papers presented, associations joined & everything else you need to update your CV AND then using this file, update your CV regularly or whenever the need arises.

➤ HOW TO PREPARE SOP (STATEMENT OF PURPOSE)

For admission, the SoP matters a lot, so take time and put extra effort in preparing your SoP.

What is SoP?

The reason why the university wants applicants to write an SoP is that they want to know as much as they possibly can about all the applicants. Test scores, grades and degrees, institutions of previous study and personal recommendations are all important indicators of an applicant's future success. However, these data do not reveal much about the individual, his/her motivation, why the applicant is interested in that particular program, or whether the applicant is the kind of student the faculty want around the department. The Statement of Purpose exists to allow applicants to convey something personal about themselves and to convince the faculty making the admissions selection that the applicant is an especially attractive candidate.

The SoP is thus your personal statement about who you are, what has influenced your career path so far, your professional interests and where you plan to go from here. The SoP is your chance to talk directly to the admissions committee. To make yourself stand out from among a multitude of similarly qualified candidates. To convince the committee that you have the spark, the thirst for knowledge that could add value to your class. It provides you the opportunity to present information that is not conveyed through objective data, in a clear, direct, and concise way, to explain your interests, motivations, goals and special talents. It must be honest.

A good SoP will certainly improve your chances of getting admission to the university of your choice, and may even compensate for weaker portions of your application such as less-than-perfect grades. A bad SoP, on the other hand, has the potential to drag down an otherwise strong application. Writing a reasonably good Statement of Purpose requires care, attention, patience and enough time for you to be able to write several drafts, show them to people and polish the essay till you get a version you are happy with. Note that:

- The SoP should be specific and tailored according to the university and the program you are applying to.
- The best way to make a targeted SoP is to first go through the program you want to apply for. Check its course contents and see what the professors are doing for research. Gather as much information as possible about the university, the program, the faculty and their research interests. Then try to relate your previous studies, research papers and job experience with the course content.
- To prepare your SoP, firstly, prepare an outline of the topics you want to cover (e.g., professional objectives and personal background) and list supporting material under each main topic. Write a rough draft in which you transform your outline into prose. And then amend it and add the other related stuff.
- Be specific while mentioning your field of work, study or research. Stick to the points requested by each university, and avoid lengthy personal or philosophical discussions.
- If the application instructions give a specific or maximum length (one or two pages) for the Statement of Purpose, do not exceed it. Be brief, yet complete.
- Check your grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization carefully.

- After having written your SoP, examine it for continuity and revise for focus, clarity and depth.
- Revise and amend it as many times as necessary, as the SoP plays a very vital role in your admission.

Purpose of SoP

As mentioned previously, the purpose of SoP is to persuade the admission committee that you are an applicant they should choose. You may want to show that you have the ability and motivation to succeed in your field, or you may want to show the committee that, on the basis of your experience, you are the kind of candidate who will do well in the field.

Usually graduate and professional universities are interested in the following:

1. Your purpose in graduate study.

You must have thought this through before you try to answer the question.

2. The area of study in which you wish to specialize.

This requires that you know the field well enough to make such decision.

3. Your future use of your graduate study.

This will include your career goals and plans for your future.

4. Your special preparation and fitness for study in the field.

This is the opportunity to relate your academic background with your extracurricular experience to show how they unite to make you a special candidate.

5. Any problems or inconsistencies in your records or scores such as a bad semester.

Be sure to explain in a positive manner and justify the explanation. Since this is a rebuttal argument, it should be followed by a positive statement of your abilities.

6. You may be asked, "Why do you wish to attend this university?" This requires that you have done your research about the university and know what its special appeal is to you.

7. Above all this, the statement is to contain information about you as a person. They know nothing about you that you don't tell them. You are the subject of the statement.

Things that SoP should do

The following are few of the things that the SoP should do:

1. It should be objective yet self-revelatory. Write directly and in a straightforward manner that tells about your experience and what it means to you. Do not use "academese" or jargon.
2. It should form conclusions that explain the value and meaning of your experiences such as what you learned:

- a. about yourself
 - b. about your field
 - c. about your future goals
 - d. about your career concerns.
3. It should be specific. Document your conclusions with specific instances or draw your conclusions as the result of individual experience.
 4. It should be an example of careful persuasive writing.

Parts of an SoP

A good SoP should have the following main parts:-

Introduction:

In this section, introduce yourself, your educational background and what studies/research you have done as an undergraduate.

Interests:

In this section, list your interests and the program you want to study and state why you want to pursue that particular program. Mention your work experience relating to that program. Also state how your background (educational or professional) would help you in pursuing the program.

Future Plans:

In this section, state your future plans, what you want to do after your studies and mention how your studies would help you in your future plans.

Sample SoP

(It is just a sample, DONOT copy it or use as it is, Make your own SoP)

Statement of Purpose

My objective for graduate studies in Computer Science is to prepare myself for the long term goal of pursuing a career of teaching and research.

I have nurtured a strong passion to become a scientist and pursue research. In the pursuit of knowledge, I have always adopted a rigorous approach in order to attain an in-depth understanding of the subject at hand. This is amply reflected in my consistently brilliant career, as I have always secured top positions in the class and have received numerous national level awards. With a GPA of 3.96, I am ranked first at the **I.I.T** among nearly 250 students.

I have been involved in research in “Parallel and Distributed Computing Systems”. I studied various problems in distributed systems and distributed databases including deadlock detection and resolution, termination detection, distributed snapshots and

consistency. I have been attracted towards the field of correctness of parallel programs. I published a Technical Report reporting errors in two published deadlock detection algorithms and highlighting their underlying deficiencies with respect to the distributed nature of computation. I am also involved in the development of an optimizer generator which would automate the process of writing optimizers based on the specifications of the optimizations. I am currently engaged in writing a paper on an efficient algorithm for performing global data-flow analysis. The new algorithm that I have developed utilizes the notion of backward information flow to perform propagation using work-lists in an efficient manner. I have been in correspondence with **Professor A.B.C** about my algorithm and other aspects of the problem.

I have chosen to pursue graduate studies at **P.Q.R University** because by working under the guidance of the distinguished researchers, I am confident to make a genuine contribution in the field of Computer Science. My interest in research has burgeoned during my undergraduate studies at I.I.T. I have excelled in our well-rounded and exacting undergraduate program and have developed a solid background to take up research in Computer Science.

I have decided to go for graduate studies which calls for a personal commitment to the fulfilling craft of independent research and that involves willingly making personal sacrifices of time, leisure and immediate reward. In turn, I shall get intellectual satisfaction and the gratification of becoming a contributor to knowledge through research and the greater personal rewards of learning and discovery. I believe that I possess the motivation, intellectual ability and preparation to set out on this exhilarating and arduous path and to make significant original contributions to your on-going research work.

I look forward to joining **P.Q.R University** as a graduate student at your esteemed department.

Yours Truly,

XYZ.

Ten Do's and Don'ts for Your SoP

The Do's

1. Unite your essay and give it direction with a theme or thesis. The thesis is the main point you want to communicate.
2. Before you begin writing, choose what you want to discuss and the order in which you want to discuss it.
3. Use concrete examples from your life experience to support your thesis and distinguish yourself from other applicants.
4. Write about what interests you, excites you. That's what the admissions staff wants to read.
5. Start your essay with an attention-grabbing lead -- an anecdote, quote, question, or

- engaging description of a scene.
6. End your essay with a conclusion that refers back to the lead and restates your thesis.
 7. Revise your essay as many times as possible.
 8. In addition to your editing, ask someone else to critique your SoP for you.
 9. Proofread your personal statement by reading it out loud or reading it into a tape recorder and playing back the tape
 10. Write clearly, succinctly.

The Don'ts

1. Don't copy or imitate someone else's SoP.
2. Don't make things up and don't make claims that are not backed up by the application.
3. Don't include information that doesn't support your thesis.
4. Don't start your essay with "I was born in...", or "My parents came from..."
5. Don't write an autobiography, itinerary, or résumé in prose.
6. Don't try to be a clown (gentle humor might be OK).
7. Don't be afraid to start over if the essay just isn't working or doesn't answer the essay question.
8. Don't try to impress your reader with your vocabulary.
9. Don't rely exclusively on your computer to check your spelling.
10. Don't provide a collection of generic statements and platitudes.
11. Don't give mealy-mouthed, weak excuses for your low GPA or test scores.

- Keep in mind that SoP has to undergo many revisions by oneself as well as the experienced people (who have gone through the same process) and people with good written skills. It is the focus, clarity of thought, tones as well the language that affects SoP along with the particulars of the candidate.

You can use the internet to search for sample SoP's and other tips, also see the following websites for tips and sample SOPs:-

- Search [Google](#) (or any other search engine) for **Statement of Purpose**
- StatementofPurpose.com: <http://www.statementofpurpose.com/>
- EssayInfo.com: http://essayinfo.com/essays/admission_essay.php
- AdmissionEssays.com <http://www.admissionsessays.com>
- <http://www.sru.edu/depts/admissio/lagnese/essays.htm>
- <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/admiss.html>
- <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/apessay.html>
- <http://students.berkeley.edu/apa/personalstatement/index.htm>
- http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/workshop/advice/writing_personal_statements.htm

➤ HOW TO PREPARE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

The Letters of Recommendation are of utmost importance for admission as well as for applying for any scholarships, TA/RA ship or any other kind of funding.

Recommendation Letters are meant to provide a third-person perspective on you as an individual. While your grades/scores are supposed to represent your intellectual capabilities and your SoP allows you the opportunity of presenting your point of view, recommendations by those who know you, give the university an independent assessment of your skills and qualities. They verify your claims and provide the admissions committee an opportunity to learn more about you from people you have worked closely with.

Remember that every part of your application, builds an image of your personality in the minds of the Admission Committee. The recommendation letters provide a third person's perspective on the kind of person you are. What a recommendation letter writes about you should add or supplement what you claim to be through your essays/SoP and work experience details.

In preparing reference letters, focus more on content. A good reference letter should be **reasonable** and **specific**. **Reasonable** means that the person writing the letter knows you well and has the qualifications to evaluate you (either in the capacity of being your professor or being your employer). And **specific** means that the letter shouldn't contain general or vague statements, instead it should be specific about your abilities and qualities and if possible should cite specific examples about you and your educational and professional career.

You have to take the recommendation letters from your professors or in case you are employed some where, then it is recommended that you take one letter from your university and one from your employer. Take the recommendation letters only from the right people. Do never take recommendation letters from people other than your professors or employer i.e., don't take recommendation letters from non-professional people or people who don't know you professionally.

The Letter of recommendation from a Professor may touch on the following points of potential interest to the admissions committees:

- How good are your research skills (of great interest to most graduate programs)?
- Do you offer thoughtful contributions to class discussions?
- Do you have good interpersonal skills that enable you to get along with faculty and other students?
- Do you exhibit strong leadership skills?
- Have you contributed to the various extracurricular activities of the Department?

In order to get the recommendation letters, you would be confronted with either one of the following two options:

1. Either the person you want to take recommendation letter from would write the letter himself. In this case, provide him with your Curriculum Vitae (CV), Statement of Purpose (SoP), Result Cards, details of the program & university you want to get admission in, points that you would like him to mention in the recommendation letter and possibly the tips mentioned below.

2. He might ask you to write the letter yourself and give it to him for reviewing and signature. In that case prepare the letter yourself with the help of afore mentioned things. For other tips, see below.

Also keep in mind that if you are writing more than one recommendation letter for yourself, then **be diverse** and make these letters different from each other by presenting different aspects of your personality in each of the letters. Moreover the letters shouldn't contain identical sentences. And as always don't lie and don't mislead.

Tips for Recommenders

Following are the points that a person should keep in mind while preparing the letter of recommendation (for himself or for someone else).

1. **Review a copy of the applicant's personal statement (SoP) or application essays** so that your letter of recommendation can dovetail with--not conflict with or duplicate--the rest of the application.

2. **Ask the applicant to supply you with additional information like a résumé and details of the program etc.**

3. **Describe your qualifications for comparing the applicant to other applicants.**

I have been teaching for twenty years and have advised approximately 450 students on independent research projects over the last five years.

I have personally supervised ten interns every summer for the last five years plus worked with over two hundred college graduates in my capacity as trainer for Big Bank Corp.

4. **Discuss how well you know the applicant.**

I was able to get to know Mr. Ali because he made it a point to attend two of my sections every week when only one was required.

Miss Sonia reported directly to me for two years prior to her well-deserved promotion to the position of Senior in our Big Six Accounting Firm.

5. **Choose two to three qualities that you observed in the applicant.**

Imran has a rare blend of top writing and interpersonal skills.

The combination of tenacity, analytical abilities, and good communications skills found in Mr. Ali is truly unique.

6. In discussing those qualities, **support your statements with specific instances in which he or she demonstrated those attributes.** Be as concrete and detailed as possible.

He is the only student I ever had, who came to all my office hours as part of a relentless and ultimately successful drive to master financial theory. He was one of just ten percent in the class to receive an A.

Because of Sonia's writing skills, I didn't hesitate to ask her to write a report which was used by our PAC as the basis for a major policy statement.

7. Try to quantify the student's strengths or rank him or her vis a vis other applicants that you have observed.

He was in the top 10% of his class.

She has the best analytical skills of any person of her age that I have ever supervised.

8. Avoid generalities and platitudes.

9. You may include some mild criticism, typically the flip-side of a strength.

The only fault I have encountered in him is his retiring nature. His modesty sometimes hides a young man of remarkable strength and broad interests.

10. Discuss the applicant's potential in his or her chosen field.

I enthusiastically recommend Mr. Ali to your business school. This well-rounded student will be a fine businessperson.

With her exceptional leadership, writing, and quantitative skills, Miss Sonia will be an outstanding strategic consultant and a credit to the business school she attends.

Sample Letter of Recommendation

(It is just a sample, DONOT copy it or use as it is, Prepare your own)

Letter of Recommendation

It is a pleasure to provide recommendation for [Applicant]. [Applicant] was my student in [Institution]. I have been teaching in [Institution] for the last five years, [Applicant] is among the very talented students that [Institution] has produced in this period. He was a very good student, extremely quick in grasping the concepts and ideas. He is keen to learn new things. He is a hard-working person, works well with people, is courteous, and dependable.

His final year project was “[Project Name]” under my supervision. After graduating from [Institution], he joined “[Company Name]”, a branch office ----- . The company has successfully ----- . He was involved in design and implementation of ---- [Project carried out by the Company]----- . He possesses not only a critical mind but also represents the ideal combination sought after in a thorough professional. He is punctual,

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prompt and complete in his work. His attitude towards colleagues is cooperative and congenial. His conduct is upright and decent. His communication skills, both in speaking and writing, are excellent.

The [Company] employs some of the most talented students in Pakistan and have a highly challenging and competitive work environment. I consider [Applicant] to be an indispensable member of our outstanding team. He is both professionally and academically sound in his chosen field of specialization. I am pleased to strongly recommend [Applicant] for admission to your graduate program. I am confident that he will show excellent performance in his higher studies and in advanced, graduate level research. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

[Recommender]
Name & Signature
Email, Tel Nos & Address

You can use the internet to search for sample Letter of Recommendations and other tips, also see the following websites:-

- <http://www.uwm.edu/People/ccp2/work/recletter.html>
- <http://www.psywww.com/careers/lettrec.htm>

Useful Websites for the Admission Process

A few websites useful for the various steps in the admission process (preparing CV, SOPs, recommendation letters, Test Preparations, finding universities and several other tips) are listed below:

- Accepted.com: <http://www.accepted.com/>
- Graduates Hotline: <http://www.graduateshotline.com/>
- OSVita.org: <http://www.osvita.org/>
- InfoZee.com <http://www.infozee.com/>
- Purdue's OWL: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/index.html>

Attestation of Documents

Bear in mind that applications with incomplete documents or un-attested documents are not considered, so make sure your application and documents are complete in all regards and that they are properly attested.

Note that the documents must be attested either by the issuing authority (issuing university, institute, college or educational board) or by the notary public. A few German universities require that documents be attested only either by the notary public or the German consulate/embassy. Check for this requirement in the admission details on the university website and follow it strictly.

Things to check for when posting applications



Put lots of effort and concentration while preparing your application and other related documents. Don't be complacent. Don't get lazy.

When you are about to post your applications, you should check for the following points:

1. Your application and all other necessary documents are complete and that nothing is remaining.
In case, you don't have any required document (e.g., your Degree or TOEFL score report), you can send it later. However you must mention this somewhere in the application and also mention that when would you send it. Make sure that all the documents reach the admission office of the university before the specified deadline; otherwise your application would be rejected.
2. Ensure that each document is attested properly.
3. See that your SoP and recommendation letters are in the proper format and that the recommendation letters are in properly sealed and signed envelopes.
4. Check for your contact details, necessary signatures and dates.

Bear in mind that you have to send the application and other documents through post or courier. You can't send the application by fax or email.

➤ **WAITING FOR THE ADMISSION RESULTS**



Once you have posted your applications, its time to wait for the admission results. As mentioned previously, you should apply to 5 or 6 universities at least so that in case of rejection from somewhere, you still have backup options.

Normally, the admission decision is conveyed to you by email. If its **acceptance**, the university would require you to reply to that mail and to confirm that you are still interested and that you would be joining the university. After you confirm this, they would send you the official admission letter and other documents by post, after which you can apply for Visa.

In case, you receive acceptances from several universities, then you have a decision to make as to which university you should choose? This is an important step, so do it carefully. Consult your friends, or persons from those universities who have studied there or are currently studying there. In addition to the five points mentioned previously in **“Searching & Selecting Universities”**, the point that **which university provides scholarship or other financial aid** should also be taken into consideration while making a decision.

➤ **WHAT IF YOU DON'T GET ADMISSION?????**



Life, almost always, never goes the way we want it to, cause if it had been so, believe me it would have been very boring. The beauty of life lies in its diversity and its uncertainty, the uncertainty associated with the future. A friend of mine once said to me **“Life is not perfect, Do you know why? Because we are not perfect, neither you nor me.”**

If you fail and don't get admission anywhere, don't loose hope and don't get dis-hearted. Pause for a moment and think that it's not the end of life. Just realize that most probably it was some fault on your part because of which you failed.

The best thing that you can do after any failure is to learn the lessons from it (causes of that failure) and then never repeat those mistakes again.

If you fail to get admission somewhere, ponder and scrutinize as to what went wrong? Was it:

- Your low grades/GPA?
- Low Test scores?
- Improper Recommendation letters or SoP?
- Documents were not fully prepared or were not attested properly?
- Your documents reached there after the deadline?
- The university has very high admission criteria.
- Or was there something else?

WHATEVER THE REASON, TRY TO REMOVE THOSE BY REWORKING ON THEM AND BE MORE CAREFUL AND MORE PLANNED NEXT TIME. HOPEFULLY YOU WOULD NOT FAIL AGAIN.

A few universities do give you a chance to appeal against the rejection decision. If you are given such a chance and also have been informed of the reasons, then try to eliminate those reasons that caused the rejection and appeal against the decision.

➤ EXPENSES, SCHOLARSHIPS & JOBS

EXPENSES

- Since there are no tuition fees (except UK), so the only expenses that you would have to bear would be those of living (accommodation + transport + food + clothes etc).
- Although the expenses vary from country to country and city to city and also on your lifestyle but you should keep in mind that wherever you are in Europe, you would be having an expense of around 350-500 Euros (app. 20,000 - 40,000 Pakistani rupees) per month. Out of this, your biggest expenditure would be on accommodation (app. half).

- In **Germany**, the total average monthly expense is around 350-500 Euros.
- In **Denmark**, the total average monthly expense is around 2800-3500 DKK.
- In **Sweden**, the total average monthly expense is around 3500-4500 SEK.
- In **Finland**, the total average monthly expense is around 500-600 Euros.

For currency conversion and exchange rates, use [XE.com's Universal Currency Converter](http://www.xe.com) (<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>) or [ForexPK.com](http://www.forexpk.com) (<http://www.forexpk.com>)

Accommodation



- The accommodation (in some cases) is arranged by the university and if it's the case, they would inform you about the procedure to apply for accommodation once you get the admission. You should strictly follow that and apply for the accommodation as soon as possible as housing opportunities are limited and student housing is very costly throughout Europe.
- In case the university is not arranging accommodation for you, then you have the following options:
 1. If you have some friends or acquaintances living in the place where you are going to study, ask them to help you in searching for accommodation well before you leave.
 2. In addition, there are several organizations which help foreign students to find accommodations. Your university might provide you a list of such organizations along with the Admission Letter. Use the following for Germany & Denmark:
 - Accommodation for Students in Germany:
<http://www.studentenwerk.mhn.de/servicepaket/index-uk.html>

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- Accommodation for Students in Denmark:
<http://www.ciu.dk>
- For other countries, search the internet or contact the university and ask them to help you.
- Note that, in order to reduce expenditures, you can also share the accommodation with some one else provided it is not against the rules at that place.

- The Visa authorities of most of the European countries require you to take the expenses with you either for the first year (app. 7000 Euros (500,000 PK Rupees)) or for the whole duration of your stay there.
- You can have a fair idea of the expense that you would be having in that particular city by visiting the *FAQs section* or *list of practical matters* of the university website you are applying to. The expense mentioned there would however be slightly exaggerated, and you can consider the actual expense to be 75-80 % of that.

You have several options to bear the expenses:

1. You can take all the required money with you
2. You can seek a scholarship
3. You can do part-time (student / odd) jobs to meet your expenses.
This is what most people do.

These are further explained below.



TAKING ALL THE EXPENSES WITH YOU

If you are well-off and can afford to take all your expenses with you, then it would be good, since you wouldn't have to do part-time jobs and you would be able to concentrate fully on your studies which, mind you, are really demanding full-time studies.



SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships make life quite easier, so try your best to get one.

- Unfortunately, most of the European universities don't offer scholarships. This is true especially in case of Germany and Sweden etc, and especially if you don't have an exceptional educational or professional background. Majority of the scholarships and funding are offered at PhD level.
- However exceptions are every where. Universities from Netherlands and Belgium do offer scholarships. Moreover, some form of T.A. (Teacher Assistant) or R.A. (Research Assistant) ships are also available in various universities. This depends on the program that you are studying in, the university and also on your own capabilities.
- The information whether scholarships or other funding are available or not would be mentioned on the university's website (most probably in the FAQ's section), so see the website to find information regarding the scholarship or email them. When applying to a university, you can contact its professors or admissions committee for funding and check

if you can get some sort of scholarship.

- Also note that in case a scholarship is being offered by a university, then the date to apply for it would usually be earlier than the actual admission deadline.
- Some universities might give you scholarship at the start of your second year studies, if you have performed exceptionally well during your first year.

In **Germany**, for finding Scholarships & funding, try the following links:

- DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) offers various scholarships: <http://www.daad.de/deutschland/en/2.4.html>
- Humboldt Foundation: <http://www.humboldt-foundation.de/en/programme/index.htm>
- [Stipend Information by Auswaertiges-amt.de](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de)

For finding Scholarships & funding in **Sweden**, try the following links:

- Stint: <http://www.stint.se/>
- Swedish Institute: <http://www.si.se/>

For finding Scholarships & funding in **Finland**, try the following links:

- CIMO: <http://www.cimo.fi/Resource.phx/cimo/services/scholarships.htm>
- The Academy of Finland: <http://www.aka.fi>
- <http://www.syl.helsinki.fi/english/grants03.htm>

For finding Scholarships & funding in **Norway**, try the following link:

- NORAD Fellowship Program: <http://siu.no/norad/>

In addition to the sources listed above, there are several other sources (firms & organizations) which provide scholarships and research/study grants.

TIPS FOR OBTAINING SCHOLARSHIPS

Following are a few tips for searching and obtaining a scholarship.

1. Keep your eyes and ears open to all sources from where you can get information about scholarships. These include newspapers, emails, websites, email or news groups (e.g., various Yahoo groups (<http://groups.yahoo.com>)).
2. Do not depend on one source; contacting & exploring multiple sources would yield much better results.
3. Apply to as many sources as possible and as early as possible. This will increase your chances of getting a scholarship.
4. Search & apply for scholarships intelligently i.e., particularly apply for those scholarships that are specified for your field of study.
5. Having good academic background, good grades and good scores in Tests (TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, GMAT) will always work to your benefit.
6. Fill the required forms and documents carefully.

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7. Meet the deadlines of submitting applications for scholarships; infact it is much better if you submit the applications and documents well before the deadlines.
8. The greater the effort you put in, greater are the chances to obtain a scholarship.
9. Don't get lazy and don't take anything for granted.

Following is a list of organizations that provide scholarships:

- Asian Development Bank (ADB): <http://www.adb.org/>
- Asian Scholarship Foundation: <http://www.asianscholarship.org/>
- In Pakistan, in recent years, HEC (Higher Education Commission) has also started offering scholarships for Pakistani students who wish to study abroad, but they require some sort of 2-5 years bond. Whether this bond suits you or not is up to you. For scholarships, the HEC also takes a GRE type general test. The website of HEC is <http://www.hec.gov.pk>, look for new scholarships offered by HEC on their website or in the newspapers.
- For other organizations, search the internet and use the tips mentioned above.



JOBS

The normal routine that most people follow is to bring the expenses with them (as backups). Start studying and then after three or four months, they start doing some part-time job to meet their expenses. You should have enough money to meet the expenses for at least first 4-5 months. Once you get a part time job, you can easily meet all your expenses.

There can be two types of such jobs, one are the **office-type** (depending on your field e.g., technical type/programming etc) and the other one are the **odd jobs** (like dish-washing, cleaning, newspaper distribution, jobs at fast-food restaurants etc).

- What kind of job you would be able to get depends largely on the city/country you are in, on your capabilities and also on your luck. Normally, the bigger and more technically advanced the city is, the more are the chances of getting a job.
- In countries like Germany, it is comparatively easy to get a technical type of job. If you have good programming knowledge (e.g., Java, C/C++, Web Programming), you can get a job usually within first 2-3 months.
- No matter which kind of job you get (office type or odd); you would be able to meet your expenses easily.
- In normal days, 20 (or in some cases 15) hours per week is the limit that you are allowed to work part time. By working app 10-15 hours/week, you can not only meet all your expenses but you may also be able to save.
- You can work every day or alternatively you can choose to work only on the weekends.
- During the summer (2-3 months) when universities are off, you can work full time to earn and do savings.

- **In Germany:**

Office-type job at a company pays around 11 Euros per hour.

Student job at university pays around 8-9 Euros per hour.

- **In Denmark:**
Office-type job pays around 125 DKK per hour (but it is difficult to get).
Odd job pays around 90 – 100 DKK per hour.

Keep in mind that doing a part-time job would make things slightly tougher, as studying and doing part time jobs simultaneously would require some extra effort, however it is not that much difficult as majority of the students follow this routine and are able to manage quite easily.

- **In Germany;** it is comparatively easy to find an office-type or odd job.
- **In Denmark;** it is difficult to find an office-type job, and you would have to manage with odd jobs which you would be able to find easily.
- **In Sweden;** it is difficult to find either the office-type or the odd job.
In Sweden the Masters is of 1.5 years, the universities are also good, but the job problem is there. Sweden is good for Masters if you can take all the expenses with you.

One of the biggest problems that you face while searching for jobs is the language problem.

INTERNSHIPS DURING STUDIES

A few companies (e.g., Nokia, Siemens, Microsoft etc) provide students the opportunities for internships and/or jobs during their studies. For information on such opportunities, see the company's website. A few websites (for Engineering and IT related fields) are mentioned below:

- Nokia: <http://www.nokia.com/careers/>
- Siemens: <http://www.siemens.com/>
- Microsoft: <http://www.microsoft.com/college/>
- Elektrobit Group: <http://www.elektrobit.com/>
- Digia: <http://www.digia.com/>
- Elisa: <http://www.elisa.com/>
- SSH: <http://www.ssh.com/company/careers/>
- IBM: <http://www-1.ibm.com/employment/>

EXPENSES/ JOBS INFO SUMMARY

Country	Monthly Expense	Job pays/Hour		Job Probability	
		Office-Type	Odd	Office-Type	Odd
Germany	350-500 Euros	11 Euro	8 Euro	Easy	Easy
Denmark	2800-3500 DKK	125 DKK	100 DKK	Hard	Easy
Sweden	3500-4500 SEK	135 SEK	110 SEK	Hard	Hard

➤ **LIVING, LIFE-STYLES AND LANGUAGE PROBLEMS**

LIVING & LIFE-STYLES

Throughout Europe, life is tough and busy (e.g., as compared to that in Pakistan). As you would have to do studies, job, shopping, cooking, washing, cleaning etc all by yourself. You would have to be your own mom, dad, cook and servant ☺. It would be as practical as it can get, as you would be doing all the things by yourself. It is therefore strongly recommended, that before leaving, you learn cooking and washing/cleaning etc.

A few general points about life in Europe are mentioned below:

- European people are mostly honest, nice and helpful. They respect your individuality and they give respect to everyone without any discrimination.
- In most of the European cities, markets close at 6:00 pm, cities get deserted and you will see only few people after that. However, this is not the case at weekends.
- The weather in most of the Europe is in general cold and gray. In winters, the temperature can drop to -20 degree Celsius, and in summers the temperature may touch 30 to 35 degree Celsius. The weather is snowy in winter and rainy in summer.
- Day-Light Savings is observed i.e., the clocks are advanced (normally one hour) in spring and taken back in autumn to get maximum advantage of the sunlight.
- The lifestyles vary from country to country, like e.g., in Germany, you can have a far more entertaining life including sports, parties etc. Germany is also called the heart of Europe. In Denmark, it is comparatively boring and dull.
- Most of the European countries do have a reasonable population of Pakistanis, so students from Pakistan might be able to feel at home.
- Your senior students would be very co-operative, especially those from your home country and they would try to help you as much as they can.
- You would be able to follow & practice your religion freely.
- For Muslims, Halal food is available at most of the places; however at some places or small towns you might find difficulty in finding Halal food. You would then be left with the option of cooking yourself.
- When you are there, follow all the rules and regulations (including those of work permit etc), and be a good citizen. It'll be good for you as well as for the reputation of your home country.
- Moreover, you can roam most of Europe without needing any additional Visa. That's a really cool thing if you have enough money to travel, as Europe is a very beautiful place.

Keep in mind that every country has its own culture, traditions and civilization. You should have an open mind and be able to adjust in any circumstances. But do never forget your origin, your moral values and your religion.

As they say, “**Do in Rome as Romans do**”, but don't become a Roman yourself ☺.

LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

Although for studying, language is not a problem and you don't need to learn their native language if all of your courses are in English. However language would be the biggest problem when it comes to daily life routines; since most of the Europeans prefer to use their native language even if they know English. This is especially true for countries like Germany, France and Denmark. The language is also the biggest setback that you face when you try to seek a job in these countries.

Although not strictly required, yet it is highly recommended that you learn the basics of language of the country that you are planning to go to for studies. For this:

- You can do a language course somewhere e.g., in Pakistan, you can join NUML (National University of Modern Languages <http://www.numl.edu.pk>), Goethe Institute (Karachi, Lahore) or some other institute etc or
- Try learning the language using language softwares and the internet.

Learning the language can give you that extra boost while seeking a job and would also help you in day-to-day life.

Learning German

The German Embassy recommends (although not mandatory) that you have taken a German Language course somewhere.

- ❖ To learn the basics of German Language, see my guide **German Language**. You can download it from <http://www.highereducationguide.info>
- ❖ Some German universities also conduct (free or charged) language course before the start of the studies. Your university would inform you of any such opportunity. If it is free, then it is strongly recommended to attend such a course.
- ❖ Also you can use the following websites:
 - <http://www.deutsch-lernen.com/>
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/german/index.shtml>
 - <http://german.about.com/>
 - <http://www.germanfortravellers.com/>
 - <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/german/abinitio/chap1-0.html>
 - <http://www.webgerman.com/>
 - <http://www.learn-german-online.net/>
 - <http://www.dw-world.de/english/0,3367,2469,00.html>
 - <http://www2.dw-world.de/static/language/urdu/dwn.shtml> (30 languages inc Urdu)
 - http://www.wannalearn.com/Academic_Subjects/World_Languages/German/
 - <http://www.wm.edu/modlang/gasmit/grammar/grammnu.html>
- ❖ German - English Dictionaries
 - <http://dict.leo.org/>
 - <http://dict.tu-chemnitz.de/>
 - http://quickdic.org/index_e.html
 - <http://www.pdictionary.com/german/>

Learning Swedish

- ❖ For learning Swedish, you can use the following websites:
 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/languages/swedish.shtml
 - <http://web.hhs.se/isa/swedish/>
 - <http://www.mylanguageexchange.com/Learn/Swedish.asp>
 - <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~arubin/swedish.html>
 - http://www.wannalearn.com/Academic_Subjects/World_Languages/Swedish/

Learning Danish

- ❖ For learning Danish, you can use the following websites:
 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/languages/danish.shtml
 - <http://www.speakdanish.dk/>
 - <http://dkheadlines.com/learndanish.htm>
 - http://www.wannalearn.com/Academic_Subjects/World_Languages/Danish/

For more information about various languages, you can either search the internet or visit the following websites:

- BBC's Website about European Languages:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/languages/index.shtml
- PhraseBase's Languages Information:
<http://www.phrasebase.com/languages/>

➤ STUDY IN UK

In UK, the education is not free; the universities charge tuition fees (nearly about 7000 pounds for Masters and 8000 pounds for MBAs, this is for average universities). However the plus points are that:

- The Masters, in most cases, is of one year duration; that is if you can finance all the money and you don't have to work full time to pay your fees and other expenses.
 - You can skip the semesters to work, earn and pay your fees. The students normally register with the university, pay the initial fees, attend one or two semesters, and then skip semesters to work full-time to earn money for their fees. However, bear in mind that the tuition fees are quite high and you would have to work for quite sometime before you can manage to pay your fees. And in that case, it'll obviously take longer than the specified study period to complete your studies.
 - Normally, at the time of enrollment at the university, you have to pay 50% fees (i.e., approximately 3500-4000 £). After that, you can deposit your remaining fees in the whole 1 year period and also continue your part-time work.
 - Since the universities charge fees, so it is comparatively easy to get admission in UK universities as compared to rest of Europe (that is of course if you can pay the fees).
 - You can change your courses and/or even university if you are not satisfied with the courses or the university.
 - You wouldn't face much language problems.
 - For students from Pakistan: there is a very large population of Pakistanis (the largest as compared to any other European country) in UK.
- If you want to study in UK, you should start your search from The British Council website (<http://www.britishcouncil.com>) or from EducationUK.org (<http://www.educationuk.org/>). These two websites will provide you with almost all the necessary information required.
 - Then there is UCAS (Universities & Colleges Admissions Service) (<http://www.ucas.ac.uk>) which is the central organization that processes applications for courses at UK universities and colleges.

Finding Universities in UK

For finding universities in UK, use the following links:

- FindaMasters.com: <http://www.findamasters.com/>
- HERO (Higher Education & Research Opportunities): <http://www.hero.ac.uk/>
- Research Assessment Exercise: <http://www.rae.ac.uk/>
- UKCOSA (The Council for International Education): <http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/>
- Association of Commonwealth Universities: <http://www.acu.ac.uk/>
- Prospects - Graduate Career Information: <http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>
- Universities UK: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/>
- TimesOnline University Ranking:
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,716,00.html>

- UK Universities & University Colleges Links:
<http://www.webmaster.bham.ac.uk/ukuwww.html>
<http://www.webmaster.bham.ac.uk/ukcwww.html>

For finding PhD & other research-related job opportunities:

- FindaPhD.com: <http://www.findaphd.com/>

Be aware that in the recent past, there have been reports of fake UK universities and colleges that have websites but are actually fraud. These universities & colleges take fees from the students (especially from Asian and African), but they actually don't exist hence you won't be able to get visa on the basis of admission letters from any such fraud universities. So do proper research about the university/college to which you are applying for admission before you pay any type of fees and make sure that they are accredited from UK government, the accreditation can be checked from <http://www.educationuk.org>

Scholarships for Studies in UK

For searching for scholarships for studies in UK, try the following links:

- British Council: <http://ukscholarshipsdatabase.britishcouncil.org/>
- Chevening: <http://www.chevening.com/>
- Scholarship Search: <http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk/>
- Universities UK - Student scholarships (ORS): <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/ors/>
- HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England): <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>
- Funders Online: <http://www.fundersonline.org/grantseekers/>
- Directory of Social Change: <http://www.dsc.org.uk/>

Jobs in UK

- Since there would be no language problems, so in addition to other jobs, you would be able to find jobs that include customer interaction. These include jobs at petrol stations, fast food restaurants or security jobs. These jobs will pay you around 4-5 £ per hour.
- Be prepared to do any sort of work, as currently the job scenario is not that bright due to lot of immigrants coming to UK from Africa and rest of Europe.
- The living cost in London is approximately 5000-6000 £ per year. However, mind you, London is the most expensive city, but then again job opportunities are much higher in London as compared to other UK cities.
- Jobs.ac.uk: <http://www.jobs.ac.uk/>

UK Visa

For UK Visa, in addition to other required documents, you would either have to show the scholarship letter (if you have managed to obtain one and if it covers all the expenses i.e., both Tuition fees and Accommodation) or the following:

1. **Sponsor letter** (affidavit on official stamp paper) and other necessary documents (Sponsor's Tax & Belongings documents) from your sponsor (which can be anyone, i.e., it can be your relative, friend, company or anyone else) and
2. **Bank Statements of the Sponsor** -- healthy enough to cover at least all the expenses of one year (tuition fees + living costs) i.e., a total of app 13000-14000 £.

For Visa, you can either apply directly (through FedEx) or through the British Council's **Student Select Scheme**. In this scheme, the British Council takes your case, makes proper documented file, assesses it and approves it on behalf of BCP and then forwards it to BHC (British High Commission) with recommendation from BCP director. For more information about this scheme, visit the visa and immigration section of Educationuk.org.pk (<http://www.educationuk.org.pk>)

➤ VISA & FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

The exact requirements for Visa vary from country to country, however almost all of the embassies require that you prove that you have the financial means to cover your expenses when you go there. This required money normally equals to app 7000 Euros (app 5,00,000 Pakistani rupees). For this, you can either show the Scholarship documents (if you have managed to obtain one), a letter from your Sponsor, or in case you or your parents are financing you, then to obtain the visa, you would:

- Either have to show a bank draft of the required money (for which you would require access to a foreign currency account)
- Or you would have to open a bank account in that country in your name and transfer this much money into that account
- Or in case of some universities (e.g., DTU, Denmark), you would have to transfer the money into university's bank account.

After reaching that country; if you wish you can transfer the money back home, however it is recommended to keep at least some amount with you or in the bank as backup.

The following table lists the links of visa information and also the amount required for Visa.

Country	Embassy/Visa Information	Amount Required for Visa
Germany	http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de http://www.german-embassy.org.pk/en/	7020 Euros
Denmark	http://www.udlst.dk/english/default.htm http://www.ambassade.dk/visa_denmark.php3	50,000 DKK
Sweden	http://www.migrationsverket.se/	90,000 SEK
Finland	http://formin.finland.fi/doc/eng/services/entry/reqvisa.html http://www.uvi.fi/netcomm/default.asp?language=EN	6000 Euros
Netherlands	http://www.minbuza.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=MBZ423699	
Belgium	http://www.diplomatie.be/en/travel/visa.asp	
France	http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/venir/visas/index.asp?anglais	
UK	http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk http://www.britainonline.org.pk/	14000-15000 Pounds

For a complete list of Foreign Embassies in Pakistan, visit the following websites:-

- <http://www.asinah.net/pakistanforeign.html>
- <http://www.paknet.com.pk/embassies.php>

THE VISA PROCESS NORMALLY TAKES 1-2 MONTHS AFTER YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION FOR VISA, SO TRY TO SUBMIT THE APPLICATION AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE THE ADMISSION LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY. A GOOD APPROACH IS TO PREPARE ALL THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED (AS MENTIONED BELOW, OR BY INQUIRING THE CONCERNED EMBASSY) BEFORE YOU RECEIVE OFFICIAL ADMISSION LETTER AND WHEN YOU RECEIVE THE ADMISSION LETTER, APPLY IMMEDIATELY.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR VISA

The documents that you need to submit along with the visa application differ from country to country, so you should get the list of documents required from the embassy to which you are applying for visa.

Most of the embassies require the following docs:

- Visa Application form (available from Embassy or their website)
- Letter of admission from a university
- Your Bachelor's Degree & Other Certificates
- Proof of financial means to support yourself as mentioned previously
- Your C.V.
- Your Passport (valid for 6 months beyond your intended stay there)
- Your Photographs (normally with white background)

Other documents that maybe required by some embassies are:

- Your birth certificate, marriage certificate (in case you are married), your family's registration form B and their English translations, if they are in a language other than English
 - TOEFL score report etc
 - If your courses are in a language other than English, then proof of proficiency in that language
 - Student Affidavit
- Some embassies (e.g., Danish embassy) require that some documents be attested by the Foreign Office. For Pakistan, in Islamabad, the foreign office is situated on Constitution Avenue (Shahra-e-Dastoor) near Serena International Hotel. Note that the degrees must first be attested by [HEC](#) (H-8, Islamabad) while the HSSC & SSC certificates by IBCC.
 - In Pakistan, the Visa application fee is app 3000 – 8000 PK Rupees. Also keep in mind that a few embassies might charge additional amounts for document verification etc.
 - In Pakistan, the addresses of a few embassies in Islamabad are given in the **Links & Addresses** section below. Most of the other embassies are situated in the **Diplomatic Enclave Area, Islamabad**. For going to these embassies you would first have to go to the Convention Centre, Islamabad and take the appropriate coach from there.

➤ VISA INTERVIEW: TIPS & POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Following are a few useful tips for the Visa interview:

- While going for the Visa interview, take all your original documents and one or two sets of their photocopies with you, the interviewer might ask for some document not mentioned in the visa requirements or he might want to see all your result cards and certificates.
- It is better if your original documents are in their real form and are not plastic-coated. This is because sometimes the genuineness of a document is checked by the material of the paper used (which of course can't be checked if it is plastic-coated). You might get them plastic-coated later on after you get the Visa.

If, however, you have already got them plastic-coated, then don't worry, it won't cause much problems.

- Keep in mind that if your courses are in English, then your interview would also be in English, so you should be able to give the interview in English. If your courses are in the native language (e.g., German), then the interviewer would expect you to give the interview in that language, and for that you should be able to understand and speak that language with reasonable proficiency.
- Just to clear few doubts, physical appearance pertaining to religion (e.g., beard etc) or some physical disability or ethnic or religious backgrounds do never play any role towards the approval or rejection of the Visa application.
- While going for the interview:
 - Be well groomed and dress appropriately and neatly.
 - Reach there before the scheduled time of your interview.

During your visa interview, keep in mind the following things:-

1. All the information that you present (whether written or verbal) should be coherent with each other. One part shouldn't contradict any other part.
2. Be relaxed, use good manners & face the interviewer with confidence.
3. Give him solid reasons why you have decided for further studies in his country.
4. Assure him that you would return back after studying and that you have no plans of staying there.
5. About the expenses, tell him that you would meet all the expenses with the money that you are taking with you or that your parents would finance you, don't tell him that you intend to do some sort of job there.

Possible Questions during the VISA Interview

Following are few of the possible questions that might be asked during the Visa interview. So prepare their answers before hand.

- 1) How many universities and in which countries had you applied to?
- 2) Why do you wish to study in *my country* and not any where else?
- 3) Which university are you going to? Where is it located?
- 4) Why did you select this university?
- 5) Why do you want to do MS?
- 6) What are your plans after completing studies there?
- 7) Do you plan to seek a job or stay there?
- 8) What is your TOEFL (GRE/GMAT/IELTS) score?
- 9) What was your bachelor's degree in? And from which university?
- 10) What were your grades like during your previous education?

- 11) Where have you been since the completion of your undergraduate studies?
- 12) Why you decided now to go for higher studies?
- 13) What do your parents do?
- 14) Do you have some relatives etc in *my country*?
- 15) How would you meet your expenses?
- 16) Do you plan to work during your stay there?

- If you have a genuine case and your documents are complete, then you should be able to get the visa easily.
- If your Visa application is rejected for some reason, the embassy would inform you about the reasons (maybe incomplete documents or insufficient financial proof etc.) After removing those reasons, you can reapply for Visa; however you would have to pay the Visa fee again.
In case you have to reapply for Visa, keep in mind the starting dates of your course and also when you have to reach there.



TRAVELING TO EUROPE

- From Pakistan, one-way ticket to European countries like Germany, Denmark and Sweden costs approximately 25,000 – 35,000 PK rupees. For exact amount and other details, contact the airline you would like to travel with.
- Also when planning your journey, you should try to ensure that you do not arrive at the weekend because banks and public administrative offices are closed from Friday afternoon until Monday morning.
- It is advisable that you reach your destination university/city at least a week or two in advance (before the date of your registration there), so as to adjust yourself there and if required do the arrangements for accommodation etc.
- You would have to be careful about the maximum limit of luggage that you would be allowed to carry. Most airlines allow up to 25 kg as checked-in baggage and another 10 kg as cabin luggage (these are upper limits and are subjected to airlines you use). If you would like to take extra luggage, you would have to pay additional charges, which in some cases can be quite high. In that case, you can send your extra luggage and other things through DHL or through post as it would be comparatively economical.
- Choose that airline which allows maximum luggage and also choose that airline/flight that goes to the city or town where the university (where you are going to study) is situated, since train fares are relatively high in various European countries.
- The addresses of Pakistani Embassies abroad worldwide are:
 - ❖ http://www.learn4good.com/travel/pakistan_embassies.htm

➤ **THINGS TO TAKE WITH YOU**

Once you have got admission and Visa, following is a list of things that you should take with you.

- **All of your Original Documents + Two sets of their certified photocopies. (Also leave one set of photocopies of all your documents at home)**
- **Important addresses and phone numbers (both of home country and abroad) and Bank account numbers**
- **Some Jeans/Trousers + Shirts + T-Shirts + Night-wears**
- **Shoes (Joggers + Leather Shoes + Chappal + whatever you wear) + Socks**
- **High necks (as many as you can carry)**
- **Jackets (leather + parachute-type for rains)**
- **Sweaters + Muffler + Gloves + Handkerchiefs**
- **Vests + Under wears + Leather Belt**
- **Cloth hangers**
- **Shaving kit + Comb + Hair-Oil + Nail Cutter**
- **Towel (at least 2)**
- **Tooth paste + Tooth brush + Soap + Shampoo (for your very first days)**
- **Girls should take their appropriate things, clothes, make-up and other things (By the way, I haven't seen many girls who can survive long without makeup 😊)**
- **Two packs of ball points + Pens/Markers etc + Some Paper Sheets**
- **Course Books (consult your university or students studying there)**
- **Alarm Clock + Scientific Calculator**
- **Bed Sheet + Pillow + Pillow cover + Blanket (consult your accommodation company there for exact requirements)**
- **Cutlery (a plate, glass+cup, bowl, spoon, frying pan) for early days**
- **Some common tablets (like Panadol, cough syrup etc) for back up before your health insurance. Once you get your health insurance, you will get your check-up and all medicines free of cost**
- **Extension cable 3-4m long with 4 or 5 sockets**
- **Software (or any other) CDs that you use**
- **Some currency of that country (app 500 Euros, either in the form of Currency notes or Traveler's Cheques) for initial expenses and daily use until your bank account is opened**
- **Religion-specific things e.g., Praying Mat (Jai-Namaaz) etc**
- **Any other thing that you use**

CAUTION: Keep in mind that you have to carry all these things. So DO NOT exceed your baggage limit and also do the packing properly.

➤ **This is only a general list. You can add or subtract things depending on your requirements and the place you are going to.**

➤ **THINGS TO DO BEFORE LEAVING**

- You should be aware of the names and details of courses that you are going to study. It is recommended to revise all the stuff related to those courses and if possible study other related stuff too, so that you don't face much difficulty when you start studies there. This is especially recommended for those who are doing job and are out of touch of the usual study routine.
- Visit your dentist, eye doctor and family physician for a complete check up.
- Remember to have a hair cut before leaving, as it is pretty expensive in Europe.
- Learn at least the basic day-to-day usage sentences required e.g., for saying hello, introducing yourself, finding directions and asking for food etc.
- If feasible and necessary, teach your parents and siblings how to use email and instant messengers etc so that they can be in touch with you.
- Inform the International Office nearest to your University about your arrival date, time and flight number etc. well in advance, so that they can pick you up from the airport on your arrival and/or put you up for a few days. Keep their phone numbers handy in case you need to call them from the airport.
- Check if someone from your home country is already studying there; if possible initialize contact with him so that when you go there, he might be able to help you.
- Also check if someone else is going to the same place/university where you are going to, contact him and start co-ordination with him (e.g., for shared accommodation etc.)
- Try that you have maximum knowledge about the country where you are going to, its people, their civilization and their way of living. Do your homework before you leave; the more you know about the country and the city or region you will be living in, the better prepared you will be. For this, you can use internet or any other means that you find appropriate.

For this purpose, you can use the following websites:

- CIA's World Fact book: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>
(contains detailed information about all the countries)
- LonelyPlanet.com: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/>
- Germany Tourism:
 - <http://www.germany-tourism.de/>
 - <http://www.germany-tourism.co.uk/>
- France Guide: <http://www.franceguide.com/>
- Visit Britain: <http://www.visitbritain.com/>
- Visit Belgium: <http://www.visitbelgium.com/>

➤ **LINKS & ADDRESSES**

Germany

- PSA (Pakistani Students Association), TUHH's FAQs:
<http://www.tu-harburg.de/psa/faq.html>
- PSA, RWTH-Aachen: <http://www.psa.rwth-aachen.de/psa.html>
- BildungsServer (Info about Education): http://www.eduserver.de/index_e.html
- The German Higher Education System:
[http://www.rwth-aachen.de/zentral/english TH allg_guide4.htm](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/zentral/english_TH_allg_guide4.htm)
- DAAD.de's list of useful websites: <http://www.daad.de/bookmarks/>
- HowtoGermany.com: <http://www.howtogermany.com/>
- German Study Aids and Math Shortcuts:
<http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Classroom/2927/index.html>
- Many useful links regarding Germany:
<http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Classroom/2927/delinks.htm>

Denmark

- Pakistani Students Organization, Denmark: <http://www.pesa.dk>
- **Royal Danish Embassy, Islamabad.**
House # 9, Street # 90, G-6/3, Islamabad.
Phone: (+92-51) 2824722-24 Fax: (+92-51) 2823483
Email: isbamb@um.dk

Sweden

- **Swedish Embassy, Islamabad.**
House # 4, Street # 5, F-6/3, Islamabad.
Phone: (+92-51) 2828712-3 Fax: (+92-51) 2825284
Email : ambassaden.islamabad@foreign.ministry.se

Finland

- **Finland's Embassy, Islamabad.**
House # 11, Street # 88, G-6/3, Islamabad.
Phone: (+92-51) 2828426, 2822318 Fax: (+92-51) 2828427
Email : finnemb@isd.wol.net.pk

- National Union of Finnish Students: <http://www.syl.helsinki.fi/english/index.html>
- Information about Libraries in Finland: <http://www.libraries.fi/>

Translation among various Languages

- Langenberg: <http://translation.langenberg.com/>
 - FreeTranslation: <http://www.freetranslation.com/>
 - AltaVista BabelFish: <http://babelfish.altavista.com/>
 - Google Translation: http://www.google.com/language_tools
-
- Embassy Homepage: <http://www.embassyhomepage.com/>
 - EURO Visa Information: <http://www.eurovisa.info/>
 - Immigration, Work visa and Work permit services: <http://www.workpermit.com/>
 - MIT OpenCourseWare -- All Courses List:
<http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Global/all-courses.htm>
 - Learn4Good.com: <http://www.learn4good.com/>
 - PhDs.org: <http://www.phds.org>
 - New Scientist Jobs: <http://www.newscientistjobs.com/>
 - International Association of Universities (IAU): <http://www.unesco.org/iau/>
 - SAT: <http://www.collegeboard.com/>
 - American Student Counseling Center, Islamabad (for TOEFL, GRE, GMAT)
House # 16, Street # 84, Ataturk Avenue, G-6/4, Islamabad.
Phone: (+92-51) 2272 708 Fax: (+92-51) 2271 563

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or

**Make your cheques payable to: Tauseef Afzal. Account No: 17545-0
Habib Bank Ltd, SDv Branch, Saddar, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.**

Send your cheques, money orders or cash to the following address:

Tauseef Afzal. c/o House No. 129, Street No. 20, F-10/2, Islamabad, Pakistan.

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Version History:

- **v 1.0:** 1st version of this Guide.
- **v 2.0:** 2nd version of this Guide.
 - Following topics were added:
 - Information about IELTS, GRE, GMAT & their preparation
 - How to prepare your CV & Letters of Recommendation
 - Sample SoP & Letter of Recommendation
 - Tips for tests, scholarships and Visa interview
 - Information about Study in UK
 - Waiting for admission results & what if you don't get admission?
 - Several other sections were updated

Disclaimer:

- This guide is meant for informational purposes only. Everything given in this guide is correct and has been provided with the best of intentions. I assume no responsibility for any error in the information provided.
- The exact requirements of admission and visa may vary from year to year, so you should check with the concerned university or embassy yourself.
- The expenses, rates and other figures may vary with time.

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- The information in this guide has been collected from many sources including but not limited to internet, emails from my friends, university websites, brochures and various other sources. The intent is to collect and present all the necessary information in a consolidated form for the benefit of those who need it.
- All the registered trademarks are properties of their respective owners.
- Some parts of this guide have been possible because of contributions and help from my friends who are currently studying in Europe or have completed their studies. I would like to offer my thanks and best wishes to all those who have contributed in any way.
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