**Formal Motivational Letter – Guide**

This document is meant as a guide with a possible layout and example for the formal and motivational letter to apply to the SEMP programme. The letter is addressed and sent electronically to the International Coordinator. Please note that the process is competitive and the strength of your application may be taken into consideration. Remember to also include a second choice.

Guidelines and tips for the letter

* It is a formal letter so make sure that it is grammatically sound, does not have contractions and has the format of a letter.
* Write between 1000 and 1200 words.
* Include a second choice.
* Mention in the subject line which Uni you apply for and for which term (AS/FS/both).
* Beforehand, look at the universities you are interested in. What do they offer besides English courses? Are there any extracurricular activities that might fit you well? What is the location of the university and why might it fit you?

Layout

Surname Name

Matriculation number

Major/minor

Street address

Postal code City

Phone number

UNIBE mail

To the International Coordinator (IC) of the

English Department of the University of Bern

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**Application Study Abroad SEMP *Your first choice* or *Your second choice* during the *Autumn/Spring/Both Terms of the Year XXXX***

Dear Dr. Nyffenegger-Staub,   
Dear Nicole,

*First write about your current study program and your (planned) focus. Also mention here your first and second choice again as well as when you plan to do your stay-abroad and for how long.*

*Secondly elaborate why the study program of the universities you wish to attend speak to you. You do not need to go into specific details but it should be clear that you have looked at the programmes, know what they offer/require and how that might align with your own interests. You must do this for you first and second choice.*

*Write another paragraph about your choices concerning other aspects that speak to you: geographical location of the universities, extracurricular activities they offer etc. Here you can also add other factors why you should be nominated to go there, for example if it would be advantageous for your minor or if you have the option to complete you stay abroad there through a job offer after the semester abroad.*

*Finally show that you have started to roughly plan the time frame of your stay-abroad with options aside from studying since you will not be able to complete the entirety of your stay abroad requirements with just one semester abroad. However, this does not yet have to be too elaborate. Afterwards finish your letter in the regular manner.*

Yours sincerely,

Surname Name

City, Date



Example

Surname Name

Matriculation number

Street address

Postal code City

Phone number

UNIBE mail

To the International Coordinator (IC) of the

English Department of the University of Bern

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**Application Study Abroad SEMP University of Kent or University of Essex during the Autumn Term of 2023 (First Choice: Kent, Second Choice: Essex)**

Dear Dr. Nyffenegger-Staub,   
Dear Nicole,

I am currently studying English as my major and history as my minor in my third semester. In English my interests lie with literature rather than linguistics. Especially so the contexts in which the respective literature was written. Therefore I believe that the university of Kent as my first choice and the university of Essex as my second choice would be a great fit for me. I would like to attend one of these universities in the autumn term of 2023. Nonetheless, in this letter I aim to show that not just the universities themselves but also the cities in which they are located would be a great fit for me.

Canterbury is a city with an impressive literary heritage. The Canterbury Cathedral Li­brary holds pieces dating back to Old English days. Several world renown authors in­cluding Kazuo Ishiguro, who graduated at Kent, Geoffrey Chaucer or Charles Dickens have left their traces in Canterbury. Even the prospect of attending lectures and semi­nars at the Canterbury campus of the University of Kent is inspiring. What I like about the English literature BA programme at Kent is that it not only tackles British heavy­weights when it comes to literary works and authors. The syllabus of the three-year programme encompasses a wide range of literatures from English-speaking areas all over the world. Thus, students first can gain an overview but also have a lot of different options when they later specialise themselves. In this sense I am confident to find courses at Kent which will truly fit me. My plan is to continue catering to my main interests of study which are early modern English literature and North American liter­ature between 1850 and 1950. Additionally, Kent would enable me to broaden my knowledge on other literatures even more because of the teaching staff’s wide range of specialisations. Also, creativity seems to be valued at Kent. While other universities have students take exams to grade a course, when studying English at the Canterbury Campus one can chose to do a piece of writing (e.g. a novella) or a documentary film instead of taking an exam. My Maturaarbeit was the creation of five short stories. So, when I see creativity being encouraged by an institution, I know that I will enjoy my stay there.

The study programme for BA English literature at the University of Essex, like at Kent, includes courses and modules in a wide range of subfields within literature. The lec­tures and seminars almost address everything. There are courses about Shakespeare, dystopian literature, the digital age and even zombie narratives. I feel like students studying English literature at the Colchester Campus of Essex can tailor their degree to their interests. This is vital for me, as I am all about discovering new works, authors, and concepts in the very vast field of literature while also pursuing my main interests. The English literature programme is based in the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies. Interdisciplinary approaches are omnipresent at Essex. Literature, his­tory, and politics are connected interdisciplinary. But it does not stop there. The de­partment examines various genres that are not part of the “typical” English literature BA syllabus. Students can for example take courses on travel writing or podcasts. Next to books the teaching staff also addresses other media like plays, films, and newspa­pers. I feel like I would discover totally new facets of literature at Essex. And learning new ways of how to approach literature would certainly benefit my studies coming back to Bern.

When it comes to their geographical location Canterbury and Colchester are quite sim­ilar. Both are near the sea, one or two train-hours away from London and surrounded by the beautiful English countryside. While I would certainly undertake a few trips to London, to visit the Globe for example, super big cities are not places where I like to stay for large amounts of time, let alone more than three months. Thus, the sizes of both Canterbury and Colchester would be just right for me. As I really enjoy meeting new people the respective campuses with quite a lot of student activity and clubs would be the perfect place for me. Up to now I have not had the chance to interact extensively with English speakers. Spending several months with English-speaking staff and students on campus and in class would highly benefit my English. After almost ten years I can speak English quite well. But since I have never interacted with native speak­ers over an extended period, I feel like I would gain in fluency and confidence over the course of my stay. And doing so in a country whose history and culture have long fas­cinated me would motivate me even further. Experiencing other ways of teaching, learning, and studying would be useful for my further studies but also since teacher is a profession I might pursue after university. Both universities and their English depart­ments have an excellent reputation in supporting their home and international stu­dents. Most students and graduates recommend the universities and the reports from Bernese students I found were not negative.

My plan is to spend the autumn term 2023 studying abroad at either Kent or Essex since both universities would fit me well. As a major student I will need to stay for more than three to four months. Both locations would offer possibilities of attaching a fur­ther stay either before and/or after the autumn term. I can see myself helping at a university library, doing volunteer work on campus, or maybe teaching either German or French. I love football, cycling and sailing. There might be the possibility to do some­thing in that direction too in the regions of Colchester or Canterbury.

Of course, the planning of the time before and/or after the actual study period is still in its early phase. The first step is to organise my time at the university and once that is set, I will be able to plan the further time spent abroad more easily. Nevertheless, I hope that I was able to outline somewhat clearly why the universities of Kent and Essex would fit me best. I am looking forward to meeting you to further discuss the planning of my study abroad and answer any of your questions regarding my application.

Yours sincerely,

Surname Name

City, Date

