

ERASMUS MUNDUS SCHOLARSHIP

A Complete Guide



Ali Subhan
EMAI Cohort 2024

About Me

Hey Everyone! Hope you are doing great. First of all let's start by a bit introduction of myself. I am Ali Subhan and have done my Bachelors in Electrical Engineering from NUST Islamabad. Throughout my Bachelors my interests have been AI, Machine Learning and Computer Vision. I graduated with a 3.54 CGPA and I have a publication in my Bachelors related to deep learning and computer vision. I have no work experience in the industry as I started my Masters just after my graduation but I have one year experience of working at a research lab inside NUST and also a 3 month summer internship, both related to AI.

I have been selected to join the [EMAI - Erasmus Mundus joint Master in Artificial Intelligence](#) program as a fully-funded Erasmus student!

EMAI is a two-year Master's program that will take place across four leading European universities:

1. [Universitat Pompeu Fabra](#) (Barcelona, Spain) ES
2. [Sapienza Università di Roma](#) (Rome, Italy) IT
3. [Radboud University](#) (Nijmegen, Netherlands) NL
4. [University of Ljubljana](#) (Ljubljana, Slovenia) SI

Moreover, as a part of this program, I will also be attending a summer school at [UCL](#) London GB—one of the most prestigious universities in the world. EMAI also has an incredible network of 12 industrial partners, from leading multinational companies to innovative SMEs. This opportunity will allow me to bridge academic theory with real-world AI applications!

What excites me even more are the specialization opportunities during the second year of the program. EMAI offers four cutting-edge strands:

1. Intelligent Decision Making in Spain ES
2. Robotics in Italy IT
3. Cybersecurity in the Netherlands NL
4. Data Science in Slovenia SI

For more info you can also check out my resume which I have shared in the resume section below.

Disclaimer

Before starting, I would like to say that everything I am going to share here is just my own personal opinion. I will just speak about my own experiences and what I believe is the right or wrong

approach of doing something while applying for scholarships and specifically Erasmus Mundus. Any of you can disagree with it but here is what I believe is the best possible course of action.

General Advice

I believe there are 3 kinds of people who will be reading this document with this question in mind that how they can maximize their chances of getting selected for Erasmus. Let's start by a general advice for all 3 categories of people:

1. If **you have not still graduated and you are in your 2nd or 3rd year of Bachelors**, the advice for you is to get research experience and work experience in the field you want to pursue your Masters in. By research experience I mean that you should try to publish at least one research paper in your Bachelors. For those who don't know anything about publishing, just check the Google Scholar profiles of your university professors and see which of them are actively publishing research papers related to your desired field of interest. Contact those professors and request them to engage you in their research.

Obviously, for this you will need some skills beforehand related to that subject area or field so start working on it by doing courses online or by learning yourself. Publishing a research paper at Bachelors level is still very uncommon in Pakistan and as a matter of fact in the whole world. So if you are able to do this, it will really make your profile stand out when applying to scholarships.

Work experience in your relevant field like internships or part-time jobs also make you stand out, so if possible go for them.

2. If you are in the **final year** of your Bachelors, this is the time for you to choose your Final Year Projects (FYP), so try to choose such a topic which will also have applications in research and for which you can write a conference or journal paper by the end of your FYP. So basically what I am saying is to try to get a paper out of your FYP.
3. You have **already graduated** and have taken a break from your studies, but now you want to pursue Masters. Now most probably you have gained some work experience, that will put a good impression on your application. Due to this your profile is already strong, but to make it further better try adding some professional courses from Coursera, Udemy etc. to your profile. Other than that, if you were on good terms with some of your professors you can ask them to engage you in research with them, so that not only you get research experience but also get a paper published hopefully. I know it might not be suitable for everyone but if you can, do go for it. Maybe you can choose to work on it over the weekends when you don't have any workload of your job.

What is Erasmus Mundus Scholarship?

The Erasmus Mundus Scholarship is a prestigious and fully funded program that provides students from around the world with the opportunity to pursue joint master's degrees at multiple European universities. The scholarship is part of the Erasmus+ initiative, which promotes education, training, youth, and sport in Europe.

Here are some key features of the Erasmus Mundus Scholarship:

1. **Joint Degrees:** Students often study at two or more universities in different countries, providing a multicultural academic experience. Each program is offered by a consortium of universities, and graduates receive a joint or multiple degrees.
2. **Funding Coverage:** The scholarship typically covers all major expenses, including:
 - a. Tuition fees
 - b. Travel and relocation costs
 - c. Monthly living allowance (around 1400 Euros/month)
 - d. Health Insurance

Document Requirements

The basic documents requirement while applying for any of the Erasmus programs is the same. But very rarely some programs can also ask for some very basic additional documents. But generally, only these documents are required:

1. Europass CV
2. Letter of Motivation / SOP
3. English Language Certificate (IELTS, TOEFL etc.)
4. 2 Letters of Recommendation
5. Bachelors Transcript (6th, 7th Semester Transcript work if you have not yet graduated)

The Erasmus Mundus application can be pretty extensive so don't fill the whole application in on go. Take your time and complete the application with ease and with full dedication.

Note: You should keep in mind that as a rule, "IELTS is required must for Erasmus" and only the English proficiency certificate from your university is not enough. There are some Erasmus programs that accept the English proficiency certificate while applying, but even these programs are most probably going to ask you for IELTS when you join the program. So better to take the exam first.

Searching for your relevant Erasmus Program

Actually "Erasmus Mundus" is not a Masters program, this is an organization that provides Masters programs related to different fields. For example, the Masters I am pursuing is called EMAI (Erasmus Mundus Masters in Artificial Intelligence).

Erasmus offers Masters programs related to almost every field of education whether it is technical or non-technical. You can find Masters related to all kinds of engineering, health sciences, law, public policy, linguistics, arts, literature, sports and maybe even religious studies.

So, the very first step of your application process is to find all the Masters programs offered by Erasmus that are relevant to your area of study. For this you will have to go to the Erasmus Course Catalog website for which the link is given below:

[Erasmus Mundus Catalogue - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-commission.europa.eu/Erasmus-Mundus-Catalogue)

On this website, you can search for key words related to your field and it will show you all the Masters programs related to your field.

For example, if I am a student who is interested in Artificial Intelligence, I will try the words like “machine learning”, “artificial intelligence”, “computer science”, “computer vision” etc. while searching and it will show my programs relevant to these subject areas.

The screenshot shows the Erasmus Mundus Catalogue search interface. On the left, there is a 'Filter by' section with dropdown menus for Keywords (set to 'artificial intelligence'), Country, Duration and credits, Universities, Field of study, and Year of project selection. Below these are 'Search' and 'Clear filters' buttons. The main area on the right is titled 'Erasmus Mundus Catalogue (6)' and shows 'Showing results 1 to 6'. It lists several programs: 'Image Processing and Computer Vision ai' (IPCvai - http://ipcv.eu/), 'Copernicus Master in Digital Earth' (CDE - https://master-cde.eu/), 'Erasmus Mundus Joint Master In Artificial Intelligence' (EMAI - https://emai-master.eu), and 'Functional Advanced Materials Engineering with Artificial Intelligence for Sustainability' (FAMEAIS - https://www.fame-master.eu/). An RSS icon is visible in the top right corner of the results area.

After searching for the programs here, you will need to go to the websites of these programs to apply for these programs and to check their requirements.

Note: Be thorough in your search of programs, because it might happen in many cases that it is not explicitly written in the name of the program that they are teaching something, but they might be offering specialty in your desired field. For this I can give you two examples:

1. There is a program by the name of EMSSE (European Master in Sustainable Systems Engineering). There is nowhere written in the name that you can also study AI in this program. But when you check the outline of this program on their website, you notice that they are offering a proper specialization in AI in this program. So, it is very easy for a person applying to programs related to AI to miss out on this program.
2. The program EMAI (Erasmus Mundus Masters in Artificial Intelligence) also offers specializations in Data Science and Cybersecurity which you realize when you check the

course outline on the program website. So, a person interested in Cybersecurity might miss out on this program just because he/she didn't check the program outline.

So, the advice here is do proper research for the programs and apply to as many relevant programs as you can to maximize your chances of selection.

Note: If you are applying to multiple programs then I advise you to modify all of your documents to make them more relevant to that particular program.

Acing the IELTS Exam

First of all, let me start by saying that if you are afraid of giving the IELTS exam, "Please Don't Be" because no matter your background if you prepare correctly it is going to be the "easiest exam you are going to take in your life". I am saying this being from an FSc. (Intermediate) background, where I don't think I had ever spoken English for more than 5 minutes.

If you are the person who says "My English is not good, God knows what is going to happen in the Exam" and you get cold sweats even by the thought of it then don't worry because "You are not alone!". I used to be the same person, but with the right preparation technique Alhamdulillah I was able to score 8 bands overall in my IELTS and with just a preparation of 1.5 weeks.

The technique I am going to share here is tried and tested multiple times, I have shared it with multiple of my friends and Alhamdulillah all of them have been able to score bands ranging from 7-8, which are phenomenal in my opinion.

IELTS Exam Structure

IELTS exam has four parts:

1. Listening
2. Reading
3. Writing
4. Speaking

IELTS Scoring System

The IELTS scoring system is based on band scores ranging from 1 to 9, with each band corresponding to a specific level of English proficiency. With 1 being the lowest and 9 being the highest. You get an individual score in each of the sections of the exam. The overall score is the average of the four sections (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking), each scored individually on the same 1-9 scale. The final result is rounded to the nearest half or whole band score.

Erasmus Mundus IELTS Score Requirement

The IELTS score requirement for the Erasmus Mundus Scholarship programs typically varies depending on the specific program and universities involved. However, a minimum score of 6.5 overall, with no less than 6.0 in each section (Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking), is often required for most programs.

Some more competitive or specialized programs may require a higher score, such as 7.0 or above, particularly for fields like law, health sciences, or certain technical disciplines.

For your relevant programs, it's a good idea to confirm the exact requirement by checking the specific program guidelines on their website.

So here are some points and resources to ace your IELTS exam:

1. In Pakistan or even worldwide, there are two major institutions that conduct IELTS exam that are British Council and IDP. From these two, you are going to select British Council out of these two because of these two reasons:
 - When you register with British Council they give you a free subscription of a premium IELTS preparation website called IELTS Flex (or [Gel IELTS](#)) which in my opinion is the best and probably the only source you need for your IELTS prep.
 - The speaking part with British Council is a bit easy because here you are giving an online interview to a person which is most probably a British person. It is less intimidating as compared to a physical speaking test (which is the case for IDP) and the interviewer also gives you a bit leverage in my opinion considering that English is not our first language.
2. There are also two options for IELTS exam: Paper based and computer based. I would suggest you to take a Computer based test. For computer based you get your result within a week, while the paper based is too much hassle and the result for it comes very late.
3. In my opinion, there is no need to use any of the IELTS books, there are lots and lots of them and they are only going to confuse you.
4. Gel IELTS has practice tests which are exactly like those which you are going to see in your actual IELTS exam. I suggest you to take some time and solve all of these tests. I guess there are 40 tests for each section. By only doing these tests, you will become a pro in the Listening and Reading portions of the exam.
5. Another resource is the [IELTS with Liz](#) channel on Youtube. I suggest you to watch all of her videos and keep all of her suggestions in mind while attempting the exam.
6. Gel IELTS is enough for preparing for the Listening and Reading sections. As for writing, to get a good score follow all the instructions of Liz Channel and read sample paragraphs that are available on the Gel IELTS website.
7. One mistake that often people make in Writing section is that they do not properly assess the type of question. There are multiple types of questions that they can ask and every type has a different pattern to answer. IELTS with Liz will help you to properly assess the question type and how to answer it properly.
8. Now only the speaking section remains. For this you will need a partner to practice with, you can practice with your siblings, mother, a friend etc. First watch some videos of Mock Speaking tests on [IELTS Advantage](#) Youtube channel to get an idea of how the test is like. Then go to this [website](#) and practice the questions on this website with somebody.
9. I believe only these resources are more than enough to get a very good score in your IELTS exam.

Note: How much time you need to prepare for exam is subjective and it is different for every person. So, choose a date with which you are comfortable. But register for IELTS exam as soon as you can so you can get access to the GEL IELTS website.

Resume/CV

Another important aspect of your application is your resume. Most Erasmus Mundus programs require you to write the resume in a Europass format. You can find the Europass website link down below:

[Create your Europass CV | Europass](#)

On the Europass website, you'll be prompted to choose a template and add relevant sections to your CV. It's important to note that some Erasmus programs specify a **maximum length** for the CV, so be mindful of this. Below are the most critical sections to include:

1. **Educational Background:** Focus on your **bachelor's degree** by highlighting relevant courses you've completed. There's no need to include details about your high school (matriculation or FSC), as it's not relevant to your master's application and only takes up valuable space.
2. **Work Experience:** List your relevant work experience in **reverse chronological order**. For each role, use bullet points to outline your responsibilities and contributions, making sure to highlight how your work added value.
3. **Projects:** This is arguably the most crucial section, as it reflects your skills and knowledge in the relevant field. List your **most relevant projects** that align with the program you're applying for. Just like with work experience, describe the main objectives and your accomplishments in bullet points. If possible, include **GitHub links** for each project to showcase your work.

While these are the most important sections, you can also include additional information such as **skills, IELTS scores, languages, research publications** (if applicable), and other achievements that support your application.

You can find a sample resume [here](#).

Letter of Motivation/SOP

Arguably the most critical part of your entire application—aside from your CGPA, of course—is your Letter of Motivation, also known as the Statement of Purpose (SOP). This document is far more than just a formal requirement; it serves as a window into your goals, aspirations, and personality. Unlike transcripts or recommendation letters, the SOP gives you the unique opportunity to directly communicate with the selection committee, showcasing not only your qualifications but also your passion and commitment to the program.

A well-crafted SOP can set you apart from other applicants, even those with similar academic backgrounds. It is where you should devote the most time and attention. Drafting multiple versions is crucial to ensure you strike the right balance between depth and clarity. Your SOP should provide a detailed overview of your academic journey, relevant experiences, and professional ambitions without overwhelming the reader with excessive detail. Overloading it with too much information can detract from its effectiveness, making it less engaging and harder to follow. In fact, many programs have a limit on the number of pages you can write in your statement of purpose so make sure to check that and write accordingly.

While there are several ways to structure a Statement of Purpose (SOP), I'll outline the format I personally used. You can follow this approach, but it's crucial to customize it to reflect your own experiences and aspirations.

I divided my SOP into four key sections:

Introduction and Academic Background

Start by briefly introducing yourself and providing an overview of your academic journey, highlighting any key achievements or experiences that have shaped your interest in the field.

Research and Work Experience

In this section, detail your relevant research and professional experiences, emphasizing how they have prepared you for the challenges of the program. Focus on the skills and knowledge you've gained, and how these experiences have shaped your academic and professional development.

Professional Goals (Both Short-Term and Long-Term)

Clearly articulate your career aspirations, outlining both your immediate objectives after completing the program and your longer-term vision. Make sure to explain how your goals align with your chosen field and how your background has led you to pursue these ambitions.

Why This Program?

Conclude by explaining how the specific program will help you achieve your professional goals. Discuss why you are drawn to this particular course or institution, and what makes it the ideal fit for your academic and career plans.

It's also crucial to tailor your SOP specifically to the program you're applying for. This means thoroughly researching the program, including the unique facilities they offer, the research groups in both the host and partner countries, and any industry partnerships associated with the program.

By understanding these details, you can thoughtfully incorporate them into your SOP to demonstrate how the program's strengths align with your goals.

For example, you can highlight specific research groups whose work aligns with your interests, or mention facilities that will enhance your academic development. Additionally, if the program has strong industry connections, explaining how these partnerships can support your professional growth will further strengthen your application. Including this level of detail shows that you've not only researched the program in depth but also that you have a clear plan for leveraging its resources to achieve your short- and long-term goals.

You can check out sample drafts for SOP [here](#).

Letters of Recommendation

Obtaining recommendation letters from university professors is a vital component of the application process. Most Erasmus Mundus programs require a minimum of two recommendation letters from professors who have taught you courses related to the field of study for the program. Therefore, it's advisable to identify the most relevant professors early on and inform them about your request for a recommendation.

When selecting professors, it's also important to consider their research profile. You can do this by looking up their profiles on Google Scholar and checking their h-index score. A higher h-index typically reflects a stronger research background. Once you've chosen your professors, approach them and discuss your plans. It's best to inform them at least 2 to 3 weeks before the application deadline, as professors often have busy schedules and may delay writing the recommendations—this has been my personal experience.

To make things easier for them, you can provide a draft of the letter. This way, the professor only needs to review and upload the letter you've provided through the submission portal. Below, I've attached a draft of the letter I used personally.

Once you submit your program application, an email will be sent to the professors' email addresses requesting the recommendation. The professors will need to open the link in the email, which will direct them to a portal where they can upload the letter of recommendation. Once uploaded, you'll receive a notification via email or through your application portal confirming that the recommendation has been submitted.

You can find samples of my recommendation letters [here](#).

I hope these tips and tricks help you to secure your dream scholarship. I would suggest to try your best to showcase your profile as good as you can and then leave the rest to Allah. InshaAllah hoping to see many of you in the Erasmus family in the coming years.

I hope this guide will answer all of your questions, but if you still have any confusions feel free to reach out to me.

Your truly,

Ali Subhan