

# Motivation Letter

Frederick Kreuk      Frederick Kreuk

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Dear Sir or Madam,

In the current academic year I expect to complete my Bachelor's degree in Computer Science from the University of Amsterdam. As I enjoyed my bachelor greatly and would like to study some of the subjects I was introduced to there in more depth, I feel the master's programme Computer Science would be a good fit for me.

Over the past few years I have also discovered that I would enjoy the combination of doing research and teaching that is possible at a university.

Security is often an afterthought, yet the effects of its neglect can be dire and widespread. In addition to the traditional threat of the leaking or loss of data, the introduction of computers and networking into previously mechanical household devices means protecting them from attacks is more important than ever. Though perhaps worrying, this makes security one of the most important and exciting fields.

My personal interest in security was sparked nearly a decade ago when I jailbroke my first iPhone. After seeing that it could now run applications that it couldn't before, I wanted to know how plugging it in during the boot process could accomplish this and what exactly prevented these applications from running in the first place.

This interest continued during my bachelor's, in which one of my favourite practical assignments was a security assignment in the Operating Systems course. It basically involved a game of capture the flag in a file system, exploiting vulnerabilities in provided executables ranging from buffer overflows to timing attacks. Finding these kinds of exploits in real code was lots of fun.

My reason for choosing a joint degree at the UvA and VU is twofold. Most importantly, the VUsec research group is internationally renowned and learning from the people involved in that group would be an amazing opportunity. Secondly, I have enjoyed studying in Amsterdam and it would be nice to stay there.

I hope I have convinced you of my motivation and desire to pursue the master's

programme Computer Science.

Yours sincerely,