

Research Statement Writing Protocol and Checklist

Protocol for Writing a Research Statement

1. What Is a Research Statement?

A narrative document (2–5 pages) describing your scholarly contributions, current work, and future research agenda.

Purpose:

- Demonstrate intellectual merit and independence.
- Show feasibility of a productive research program.
- Indicate potential for funding, collaboration, and broader impact.

Audience: Faculty search committees (often outside your subfield), administrators, and potential collaborators.

2. Core Components of a Research Statement

1. Introduction / Broad Framing

- State your research area clearly and concisely.
- Use accessible language that situates your work within a wider field.

2. Current & Past Research

- Summarize dissertation/postdoc research: central question, methods, findings, contributions.
- Highlight collaborations, interdisciplinarity, and innovations.

3. Future Research Agenda

- Articulate 2–3 specific, feasible projects you will pursue in the next 3–5 years.
- Explain significance, impact, and potential for external funding.
- Address resources you'll need (equipment, collaborations, lab space, archives).

4. Integration with Teaching, Mentoring, and Broader Impacts

- Demonstrate how your research enhances teaching and student training.
- Show broader significance to the discipline, society, or industry.

5. Conclusion

- Reiterate your long-term vision and potential contributions to the institution and field.

3. Tips and Best Practices

- Audience Matters: Write for a broad academic audience, not just experts in your subfield.
- Balance: Past accomplishments show credibility; future plans show vision.

- Clarity: Avoid jargon; be specific but accessible.
- Feasibility: Propose ambitious yet realistic projects.
- Evidence of Independence: Distinguish your work from that of your mentors.
- Funding Potential: For STEM/social sciences, highlight specific agencies/programs; for humanities, note fellowships, archives, and publishing strategies.
- Tailor to Institution: Research their priorities, centers, and strategic plans.
- Length: Typically 2–5 pages (check job ad instructions).

4. STEM vs. Humanities/Social Sciences

STEM Research Statements

- Emphasize lab setup, collaborations, methodologies, and grant potential.
- Discuss technical approaches, data sources, scalability, and interdisciplinary links.
- Explicitly outline funding targets (e.g., NIH, NSF, DOE).

Humanities & Social Science Research Statements

- Focus on original contributions to scholarship, archives, and interpretive frameworks.
- Discuss book projects, articles, and publishing strategy.
- Highlight interdisciplinary relevance, societal impact, and broader cultural significance.
- Mention external fellowships, centers, or foundations relevant to your field.

Checklist for Writing a Research Statement

Big Picture

- Clearly state research area and importance in the first paragraph.
- Ensure accessibility for readers outside your subfield.

Current & Past Research

- Summarize dissertation/postdoc research (questions, methods, findings, significance).
- Highlight collaborations and interdisciplinarity.
- Show independence from advisors/mentors.

Future Research Agenda

- Outline 2–3 specific projects with clear research questions.
- Explain significance, contribution to field, and broader impact.
- Address feasibility (methods, resources, timeline).
- Identify potential funding sources (especially STEM and social sciences).

Integration & Impact



- Show connections between research, teaching, and mentoring.
- Explain broader contributions to field, institution, and society.

Style & Structure

- Logical flow (intro → past work → future agenda → conclusion).
- Concise and jargon-free; clear for interdisciplinary audience.
- Professional tone, with enthusiasm and vision.
- Length 2-5 pages (check job ad).

Final Steps

- Tailor to institution's mission, strengths, and values.
- Proofread for clarity, grammar, and polish.
- Ask peers/mentors outside your field to review for accessibility.
- Align with teaching and diversity statements for a coherent application package.