

DIVERSITY STATEMENTS

Diversity Statements are a common component of academic job applications. These Statements often prompt you to express your experiences with and commitment to diversity. You will want to focus on how you have and will contribute to efforts to enhance diversity and equity in the university setting.

1 Overview

Diversity Statements are an opportunity to strengthen your application by articulating your understanding of diversity, inclusion, and equity in higher education, in your teaching, research, mentoring, or other scholarship. Through examples, feature how you have engaged with diversity and inclusion and identify the impact on you and others. Include tangible ways that you can contribute to diversity at the specific institution.

Here are some things to consider and recommendations to get started with your Diversity Statement:

- What is diversity from your perspective? How does it matter in your life, in your work, and within higher education?
- Think within the framework of a narrative more than an academic paper or publication.
- Create content that is easily modified and meets diverse word and page count requirements.
- Diversity Statements are usually around one page, so plan on being concise with your writing and ideas.

2 Understand Your Audience

Search committees use Diversity Statements to identify candidates who have experience, skills, knowledge, and/or willingness to contribute to the institution's diversity and equity efforts. To show how you would fit into the academic community, know what your audience is searching for to highlight your related experiences and potential.

Research the following:

- The institution and department's website to learn about diversity initiatives.
- The Office of Diversity/Equity/Inclusion at the institution.
- Campus Initiatives and Cultural Centers.
- The institution's Mission and/or Strategic Plan.
- Current events involving diversity, higher education, or the institution in particular.
- Demographic data on the student population.

3 Plan Your Content

Planning what you would like to include in your Diversity Statement can help you write a more cohesive document. Keep these ideas in mind when planning what to write:

- Write content that is relevant to the institution to which you are applying, and relates to some of the areas that you researched before starting to write. (See Understand Your Audience)
- Consider using a who/what/where/how/why model and end with outcomes- how you were changed, how others were changed or supported, how this informs you moving forward in one or more aspects of your research, scholarship, teaching, and/or work and service.
- If incorporating content about your identities, show how they inform, shape, and contribute to your understanding of diversity and interaction with others.

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4

Choose a Content Area

To write an effective Diversity Statement, develop a narrative about your experience with diversity, equity, and/or inclusion. While you may have many instances to write about, it can be helpful to focus your content on one or two experiences instead of trying to cover too many topics in a short essay. Remember, you are aiming for around one page! This is not a comprehensive list, but here are some content areas to consider as you think about your experiences:

- collaboration with diverse groups;
- working with marginalized groups;
- helping individuals to overcome barriers to success;
- advocating for systemic change;
- preventing bias;
- using inclusive language and cultivating an inclusive atmosphere;
- incorporating diverse perspectives in course materials;
- future plans to advance inclusive excellence, diversity, or equity, and in what ways at the specific institution.

5

Tips

- Your statement should complement your other application documents and not repeat information.
- Know what is important to the institution with regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Follow guidelines on content and page length (usually around one page).
- Share any resources that you utilize in guiding or supporting your work in the areas of diversity, equity, and/or inclusion.
- Identify plans to contribute at the institution to which you are applying.
- Refrain from using acronyms. What is common at your institution may not be common at where you applying.
- Give yourself time to formulate your ideas and plans, and to write multiple drafts before you need to submit your application.
- Focus on what *you* have done/will do, as that is important to the hiring committee.
- Invite others who do not know you well to read your statement and ask them to share what they learned about you.
- Make sure you have used evidence-based examples.
- Ask several people to proofread your writing.

Schedule a review of your Diversity Statement by a Career Coach at the Center for Career Development.

Resources

CCD Career Coaching	https://career.uconn.edu/career-coaching/
CCD Academic Job Search Webpage	https://career.uconn.edu/graduate-students/academic-job-search-2/
UConn Writing (W) Center	https://writingcenter.uconn.edu/