RESEARCH STATEMENTS

A Research Statement, or a Statement of Research Interests, is both a reflective and future-focused document that is a component of most academic job applications. In this document, strive to create a strong image of who you are as a researcher, highlighting your experience and focusing on your future research plans.

1 Preparation

As you prepare to write your Statement think about your previous and future research experiences, and envision your fit within a new academic community. Begin by asking yourself some questions about your research before you start writing your statement.

- What is your research question?
- How did you get interested in your research topic?
- Why does your research matter?
- Why are you interested in this problem?
- Why would someone else care about this problem?

- What methods are you using to answer your research question?
- What is novel about your approach?
- What is the impact of your research in your field, and in society at large?

Spend some time researching the prospective university and department to see how your work may contribute to current lines of investigation.

- Look up the general areas of research that the potential university is interested in promoting to see how your future projects could address overall institutional goals.
- Explore the department's website to learn more about the faculty, their research, and looking for areas of possible collaboration.
- Find out more information about potential colleagues by reading their CVs, which are usually available on department websites. This will also lead you to their publications. ResearchGate and Academia.edu might also be useful tools.

2 Things to Include

Faculty are looking for a colleague who will be a good fit in the department and the overall culture of the university. Your Research Statement is your opportunity to demonstrate how your research interests align with the environment to which you are applying, and what you can bring to the department. Consider incorporating some of the following content:

About Your Future Research Potential

- Link how your past and present research will inform future research efforts
- General direction of where you would like to take your research in the next 3-5 years
- Possible future publications
- Equipment, lab space, or other resources needed for projects
- Potential faculty research collaborations within the department
- Identify other departments for collaboration
- Previous successful funding and realistic future funding
- Specific future projects and timelines
- The positive impact your research can have on the department, your field, and more broadly across other academic disciplines

About Your Research Interests

- Why you are interested in your research topic
- Why your research matters - consider why someone else would be interested in your research, both inside and outside of your field
- Why it is important that *you* conduct your research, and how your approach is effective
- Summarize your research history and main projects (e.g. dissertation, theses)

Notice how there are many more items included in the Future Research Potential column! While your Research Statement should highlight some of your past research experiences, you will want to focus more on the future than the past. Your past research experiences are featured on your CV, while the Research Statement is your chance to outline your future research projects and potential. You won't be able to include everything on these lists in your statement, but including some of the content will help to create an effective document.

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3 Tips

- Know the expectations of your field and write your statement accordingly.
- Your statement should be understood by everyone in your department, including people outside of your subdiscipline.
- Your statement should complement your other application documents and not repeat much of the same information, focusing on your future research to provide new information.
- Follow position-specific guidelines on content and page length, if provided (generally around 2-4 pages).
- Recognize that a Research Statement and a Research Plan are different documents, and be sure to prepare the correct document.
- Refrain from using acronyms, those that are common at your lab or university may not be common where you applying.
- Give yourself time to formulate your ideas and plans, and to write multiple drafts before you need to submit your application.
- While research can be a team effort, focus on what *you* are doing in your research.
- Involve others who have experience in your discipline in reading your statement and ask for their input.
- Invite others who do not know you well to read your statement and ask them to share what they learned about you.
- Focus on creating a strong impression of what makes your research unique.
- Make sure you have used evidence-based examples and have shown your accomplishments.
- Ask several people to proofread your writing.
- When applying to specific positions, research what the department and institution value in the education of students.

Schedule a review of your Research 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/
Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)	https://cetl.uconn.edu/teaching-philosophy/
Center for Career Development	https://cdn.uconnectlabs.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/09/Statement-of-teaching-philosophy.pdf
UConn Writing (W) Center	https://writingcenter.uconn.edu/