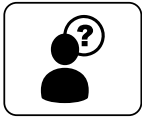


Research Statement Template



What is it?

A research statement is usually a single-spaced 1-2 page document that describes your research trajectory as a scholar, highlighting growth: from where you began to where you envision going in the next few years. Ultimately, research productivity, focus and future are the most highly scrutinized in academic faculty appointments, particularly at research-intensive universities. Tailor your research statement to the institution to which you are applying – if a university has a strong research focus, emphasize publications; if a university values teaching and research equally, consider ending with a paragraph about how your research complements your teaching and vice versa.

When is it Used?

A research statement is used when applying for academic faculty positions, and sometimes for research-intensive positions in think tanks or government. Because the academic job market is increasingly competitive, a common trend for hiring committees is to ask only for a cover letter and CV. If this is the case, you will need to condense your research statement to 1-2 paragraphs to include in the cover letter. [Visit page 44](#) to see more tips on condensing the research statement.

Structure One: Varies by Discipline

Introduction The first paragraph should introduce your research topic and interests in the context of your field. A version of the introduction to your dissertation/thesis abstract could be adapted, but here it should set up a framework for future research.

Summary Of Dissertation/Thesis This paragraph should give more detailed information about your doctoral research project. Condensing your abstract could be one strategy for developing this paragraph. Expanding the dissertation paragraph of the cover letter to address methods and more specific findings/arguments could be another. Try not to have too much language repetition across documents.

Contribution To Field And Publications Describe the significance of your projects for your field. Detail any publications initiated from your independent doctoral or postdoctoral research. Additionally, you can include plans for future publications based on your thesis. Be specific about journals to which you would submit or university presses that might be interested in the book you would develop from your dissertation (if your field expects that). If you are writing a two-page research statement, this section would likely be more than one paragraph and cover your future publication plans in greater detail.

Second Project If you are submitting a cover letter along with your research statement, then the committee may already have a paragraph describing your second project. In that case, use this space to discuss your second project in greater depth and the publication plans you envision for this project. Make sure you transition from your dissertation to your second project smoothly – you want to give a sense of your cohesion as a scholar, but also to demonstrate your capacity to conceptualize innovative research that goes well beyond your dissertation project.

Wider Impact Of Research Agenda Describe the broader significance of your work. What ties your research projects together? What impact do you want to make on your field? If you're writing a research statement for a teaching-oriented institution, you still can address some of the above questions, but make sure to connect them with your teaching.

Research Statement Template



Helpful Tip

For Humanities and humanistic Social Sciences, only describe one future project. Pacing is different for Sciences, so those in STEM fields may be able to include more than one project.

Research Statement Template Continued

Structure Two:

(This model relies on proportions, so create paragraph structures as you see fit)

25 % Previous Research Experience Describe your early work and how it solidified your interest in your field. How did these formative experiences influence your approach to research? Explain how this earlier work led to your interest in your current project.

25% Current Projects Describe your dissertation/thesis project – consider using the first paragraph from your dissertation or thesis abstract since it covers all your bases: context, methodology, findings, significance. You could also mention grants/fellowships that funded the project, publications derived from this research, and publications that are currently being developed.

50% Future Work Transition to how your current work informs your future research. Describe your next major project as you did in structure one and a realistic plan for accomplishing it. What publications do you imagine stemming from it? The last part of the research statement should be customized to demonstrate the fit of your research agenda with the institution.



Helpful Tip

Keep in mind that future projects have to be feasible for the institution to which you are applying. Does it have the resources, funding, and equipment you will need? If not, you aren't a good fit for the position (and it isn't for you).

Tips for Combining your Research and Teaching Statements

- › Research the department and university priorities
- › Based on their priorities, determine how best to combine the two statements
- › For a teaching-focused position, emphasize your teaching and end by relating your teaching to your research
- › For a research-focused position, emphasize your research and end by describing how your teaching complements your research
- › For a position that values both equally, create a statement that weaves the two together. For instance, your introduction can describe how your teaching and research inform each other. The following paragraphs depend on what you want to emphasize first, but one or two paragraphs on teaching and one or two on research can work, depending on length requirements. Conclude by reiterating the centrality of teaching to research and vice versa, based on your teaching and research philosophies.
- › Ultimately, you want to create a narrative through-line that can 1) demonstrate how teaching makes your research relevant (and vice versa) and/or 2) why your work is a relevant teaching topic

When Applying

- › Read the instructions for materials required carefully – postdoc positions often will ask for a “personal statement” that’s actually a research statement. They’ll want to know about completed work, work in progress, future work, professional goals, publication plans, etc.
- › The research statement is NOT the same as the research proposal required by many postdoc applications. Research proposals vary widely in length and have their own specific requirements¹.

¹ For more on the research proposal, see Karen Kelsky, “Dr. Karen’s Foolproof Grant Template.” The Professor Is In.