

Diversity Statements

A diversity statement is a professional document, often required for academic funding and job applications, that demonstrates your personal and/or professional experience, professional skills, and willingness to engage in activities that will enhance diversity and equity efforts at a target institution. You may also be expected address these topics in supplemental application questions (such as when applying for a teaching position at a community college) or verbally during interviews.

What does “diversity” mean?

Diversity can be variably defined, depending on the institution. Generally, the term indicates efforts to address inequity and foster greater inclusivity, not only with regards to race and gender, but often taking into account factors such as age, religion, dis/ability, sexuality, and family income or educational attainment as well.

- The UC Board of Regents defines diversity as “the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and geographic region, and more.”
- Institutions and funders request a diversity statement in order to assess an applicant’s ability to contribute to institutional goals shaped by the changing demographics of the populations they serve, the ongoing need to address historically rooted inequalities, and their desire to embrace multiple perspectives and experiences in order to improve classroom teaching and executive decision making.

How to approach writing a diversity statement?

Talk about your personal history

- Describe moments when you experienced discrimination or lack of access to opportunity based on systemic inequalities
- Address how your personal background has equipped you to motivate and support a diverse student population

Talk about your teaching

- Discuss how you welcome and support a diverse range of students in your classroom, for example through pedagogical or social interaction techniques
- Address how you incorporate diversity in your teaching methods and materials, for example by assigning diverse authors or crafting assignments appropriate to a range of learning styles

Talk about your research

- Consider how you address diversity and inequality in your own research questions/findings or artistic production

Talk about institutional transformation

- Discuss how you have supported diversity among colleagues, faculty, and staff at your own institution
- Address any diversity or equity policies you have been involved with adopting or implementing

Choose one **or more** of these approaches to writing your statement. Just be sure to ground your discussion in concrete evidence of your experience and actions.

DOs and DON'Ts

- DO discuss how your interaction/experience with diverse groups of people has informed your approach to teaching.
- DO highlight how and why your experience speaks to diversity and equity goals.
- DO be authentic and accurate in describing your background, experiences, and growth. How you frame these in relation to your overall application is the key.
- DON'T tokenize yourself (or others) – i.e., “By virtue of being (insert race/gender/sexuality, etc), I will diversify your faculty/staff.”
- DON'T alienate groups of people – i.e., “Given that (insert discipline) is an overwhelmingly male field, I intend to support hiring only women from now on.”
- DON'T make assumptions about the expectations of the application readers or the dynamics of the institution or fund to which you are applying. Do some research on them and tailor your application to suit the recipient.

Additional Resources

- <https://chroniclevitae.com/news/266-the-professor-is-in-making-sense-of-the-diversity-statement>
- www.theprofessorisin.com
- www.grwc.ucr.edu