

Teaching Statement Guidelines & Tips

- Generally, teaching statements for the academic hiring process are **1-2 pages long**. Aim to create a 1-page core version of your teaching statement.
- Use **present tense** and **first-person voice**.
- **Avoid technical terms and jargon**, as some readers can find them off-putting. Consider how you can make your language accessible to a wide audience of readers.
- **Avoid clichés and empty or formulaic statements** that don't provide a clear picture of what you do as an educator. These kinds of statements may show up in your first drafts, so focus on revision practices that move you toward being more specific and concrete.
- Some have called the teaching statement an exercise in creative non-fiction. Including **specific teaching strategies and methods**, and telling stories that illustrate those methods in action, can help your readers envision what it's like to be in your classroom.
- **Focus on student learning**, by providing concrete evidence of your attentiveness to how and when students learn. How do you know when your teaching strategies work? How do you know the students are learning? What is the impact of your teaching methods? What does teaching success look like to you, in terms of student learning?
- **Be discipline-specific**. What do you think is most important for students to learn when they take courses in your field? What disciplinary skills, habits, or ways of thinking are most important, and do they translate to the world outside the classroom? What are current disciplinary trends that you consider when you're in the classroom?
- **Know your audience**. Teaching contexts at large, research-focused universities are different than those at community colleges, as well as those at small liberal arts colleges. How can you highlight your teaching methods and experiences to demonstrate that you are a good match for the institution's teaching context?
- **Highlight your versatility**. Most academic departments want to know that you can teach both introductory courses and upper-division courses. Your approach to each of these classes will likely be different. How might you integrate evidence of your ability to teach these different kinds of classes in your statement?
- **Exercise humility**. Notice what tone you use when talking about your teaching abilities and about your students. Does your tone express commitment to teaching, respect for your students, and a willingness to develop your practice? Another way to say this is: avoid condescension or the sense that you've perfected your teaching, but also don't be self-deprecating.
- Remember that the teaching philosophy is **not an exhaustive document**, and it is not intended to repeat what is in your CV or your cover letter.

Cornell Graduate School, "Teaching Philosophy Statement" (<https://gradschool.cornell.edu/pathways-success/prepare-your-career/take-action/teaching-philosophy-statement>)

Karen Kelsky, *The Professor is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your PhD into a Job* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2015)

James Lang, "4 Steps to a Memorable Teaching Statement" (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/4-Steps-to-a-Memorable/124199>)

Chris O'Neal, Deborah Meizlish, and Matthew Kaplan, "Writing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy for the Academic Job Search" (http://www.crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource_files/CRLT_no23.pdf)

Vanderbilt Center for Teaching, "Teaching Statements" (<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-statements>)