**Research Statements**

**DEFINITION**

* The research statement is a document that describes your research experiences, interests, and plans.
* Research statements are often requested as part of the faculty application process.
* Expectations for research statements vary among disciplines. Ask faculty members in your department about the expectations for your field.

**PURPOSE**

* Departments want to learn more about your:
  + Academic specialty and interests
  + Passion for research
  + Compatibility with departmental, school, and/or university research efforts
  + Potential to earn grant money
  + Ability to operate as a professional scholar, independent of your advisor
  + Writing ability
* Writing a research statement allows you to:
  + Further reflect on and define your research interests
  + Gain confidence in your research skills and desire to become a faculty member

**CONTENT**

* Recent & Current Research
  + Research statements for current students and recent graduates usually discuss the dissertation and/or other major projects from graduate school.
  + If you have done several projects, convey the connection among them.
  + Place your work in a broader context or framework – the big picture.
  + Discuss how you became interested in your topic and why it continues to interest you.
  + Answer the “so what?” question. How does your research contribute to the field? Why does your research matter? Why is it important?
  + Briefly describe any significant recognition your research has received - publications, presentations, grants, awards, etc.
  + If you discuss projects that you have worked on with a team, be sure to articulate your contribution to the projects.
  + Acknowledge the work of other scholars in your field, when appropriate.
* Future Research
  + What are your short-term research goals (2-5 years)?
  + Discuss 2-3 feasible research ideas that interest you.
  + Explain how your goals build on (but are not necessarily direct extensions of) your recent work.
  + Describe your ideas about potential funding sources, collaborative partners, facilities, etc.
  + Consider detailing how you will involve students in your research and how your research relates to your teaching.
  + Indicate how your research goals align with departmental goals.
  + What are your longer term research goals (5+ years)?
* Appropriate Detail
  + Your plan should be well-considered, realistic, and practical.
  + Include enough detail to show depth of knowledge but do not go overboard with minutiae.
  + Consider including some preliminary data – perhaps using tables, graphs, or other illustrations.

**FORMAT**

* Your research statement should be brief and well-organized.
  + Aim for one to three pages (longer statements are sometimes appropriate).
  + The introduction should summarize the contents of the research statement and include the information that is most important for departments to know.
  + The conclusion should also summarize the contents of the research statement.
* Your research statement should be pleasing to the eye and easy to read.
  + Single-spaced or 1.5 spaced
  + Concise paragraphs
  + Short bulleted lists
  + Clear subject headings
* Your statement should not include grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors!

**GETTING STARTED**

* Contact your home department.
  + What are the norms for research statements in your field?
  + What information is known about your potential employers that might help you prepare your research statements?
* Jot down a preliminary outline and some ideas for content.
* Find sample research statements using a search engine, websites of professional organizations, etc.
* Finish a full draft.
* Have somebody proofread your research statement (peer, research team member, faculty member, career counselor, etc.)
* Consider customizing / tailoring your research statement for different job opportunities.

**WRITING SAMPLES**

* Job announcements often request a sample of your scholarly writing.
* You can send one with your application packet even if it is not requested.
* Check with a professor regarding how many samples to send, if an announcement doesn’t specify.
* Examples of samples to send:
  + Re-prints of your published articles
  + Copies of book chapters you’ve authored or co-authored
  + Pre-prints of articles in press
  + Completed chapters of your dissertation