

Many post-doc and faculty job postings – in a variety of disciplines and in an array of institutions – require that candidates send a Research Statement. Being able to write coherently about your past/current research efforts and articulately about your future research plans is very important.

DEFINITION

- The research statement 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 (undergraduate and/or graduate) 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

SAMPLE RESEARCH STATEMENTS

- Science
 - <http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career/graduate-students/academic-career-preparation/research-statement> (Ecology & Zoology)
 - <http://grad.wvu.edu/r/download/88047> (Biology)
 - http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/files/Research_PhD_Biostatistics2007.pdf (Biostats)
 - <http://web.physics.ucsb.edu/~reager/REagerResearchStatement.pdf> (Physics)
- Engineering, Technological, & Math Fields
 - http://www.cs.cornell.edu/~ssuri/About_Me_files/SidSuriRS.pdf (Computer Science)
 - <http://www.chrispoirel.com/research-statement> (Computer Science)
 - <http://www.cct.lsu.edu/~burak/research.pdf> (Math)
 - <http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career/graduate-students/academic-career-preparation/research-statement> (Engineering)
- Other Fields
 - http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/files/Research_Linguisticsfaculty2010.pdf (Linguistics)
 - <http://brucewhitehouse.files.wordpress.com/2007/10/whitehouse-research-statement-2007.pdf> (Anthropology)
 - http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/Valles%20%20Research02.pdf (Public Health)
 - <http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career/graduate-students/academic-career-preparation/research-statement> (Literature & Sociology)
 - <http://www.marileneoliver.com/writings/writresstat.html> (Art)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Vick, J. M., & Furlong, J. S. (2008). *Academic job search handbook (4th ed)*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
 - Sample research statements: Literature, Sociology, Math, CS, Biology, & Astronomy
- http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/1820
- <http://chronicle.com/article/Writing-SamplesTeaching/125726/>