

Graduate Career Services

The Graduate School and Division of Student Affairs

The Philosophy Of Teaching Statement

Some applications, especially for positions that focus more on teaching than research, will require a Teaching Statement, often as part of a larger Teaching Portfolio (see below). Sometimes called a Philosophy of Teaching, the Teaching Statement is a 1-1.5 page document that describes your views on pedagogy, including: your goals for student learning; the specific strategies you incorporate into your teaching; a description of the learning environment you create in your classroom; and a reflection on your past successes, challenges, and plans for improvement.

The goal of the Teaching Statement is to show that you are ready to teach professionally, able to improve your teaching over time, and capable of managing simultaneous teaching and research loads. To do this, the statement should convey to the hiring committee what you actually do in the classroom, using general statements followed by specific examples of things you have already done rather than hypothetically what you would do. If describing a concept you have not applied, show how you have previously witnessed it to make it less hypothetical (e.g. you shadowed a colleague, or your former professor incorporated it into his or her teaching). Whenever possible, describe how students responded positively, and show the results of initiatives you tried. To help customize your thoughts for different applications, view statements of philosophy, missions, and goals on the website of your hiring institution, and incorporate aspects of each into your own statement of teaching philosophy to show you align well with the university.



Successful teaching statements should demonstrate that you have reflected on the profession and act of teaching, that you can apply innovative strategies in a wide range of classroom environments and for diverse student populations, that you have been successful in the past, and that you continue to develop and improve your teaching skills.

To aid in your reflection, consider the following questions:

- How do students learn best?
- As an instructor, how are you engaged in the process of learning?
- How do you address the diverse needs of your students?
- How does student identity and background make a difference in how you teach?
- What motivates you to design your courses the way you do?
- How have you successfully achieved your goals for teaching in the past?
- What specific classroom strategies have worked best?
- What evidence can you supply to demonstrate the success of your strategies?
- What are your strengths as a teacher?
- What are your teaching weaknesses, and what are you doing to improve in those areas?
- What teaching goals (specific or general) do you want to achieve in the future?

Graduate Career Services

The Graduate School and Division of Student Affairs

HELPFUL HINTS:

- One of the biggest mistakes you can make is relying on abstract general statements without supplementing them with concrete examples. Hiring committees review hundreds of applications. Make yours stand out by including compelling stories about things you've had your students do and specific techniques you have applied.
- Avoid using too many buzzwords or packing it full of jargon. Your own words and experiences will be more persuasive.
- Thinking about what you didn't like in past teachers can help determine what kind of professor you strive to be.
- Research the institution and consider how class size and institutional type influence your teaching style.
- Don't just rehash your CV by listing your past teaching positions. Discuss what you learned from your previous roles and how you implement effective teaching in the classroom.
- Your ability to think critically about teaching is an essential skill that can be shown through the teaching statement. Committees do not expect you to be a perfect teacher. Instead, they want to see how you have reflected on the lessons learned and then creatively revised your approach in successful ways.
- Ask for feedback from your mentors, faculty members, Graduate Career Services, Kaneb Center, EAP, etc.

Materials to include in a Teaching "Portfolio"

Teaching Documents

1. Teaching Statement (Philosophy of Teaching) – see above
2. Teaching Biography
 - a. One or two syllabi from courses you have taught
 - b. A paragraph describing one or two projected courses you can teach (some applications may require an example syllabus for such a course)
3. Selections of innovative sample assignments, rubrics, lesson plans, graded student work

Professional Development

1. Pedagogical Training
 - a. Kaneb Center seminars and workshops, certifications, completed courses related to teaching, other training
2. Assessments and Evaluations
 - a. Student CIF results
 - b. Third party feedback (Kaneb, peers, faculty)

