

Teaching Philosophy Statement

What is a Teaching Philosophy Statement?

A teaching philosophy is a personal statement that describes your own views, beliefs and theories about how teaching should operate and students need to learn, in your discipline area.

There is not necessarily a "right" or "wrong" way to write your teaching philosophy statement. However, there are certain issues that you need to consider when making the connections between what you believe about teaching, how you teach and how you evaluate your students' learning.

Start by asking yourself:

- What is Higher Education for?
- What are students supposed to learn or how are they supposed to develop whilst studying at the University?
- How do you think students learn in your discipline and what are the main theories that influence teaching in your discipline?
- So, what teaching methods do you use that reflects this position (perhaps with a couple of examples)?
- How do you evaluate whether your teaching does indeed have the intended effect, and what other factors impact on the student learning experience?
- What has informed your thinking here?

When writing your teaching philosophy statement aim to demonstrate how you meet the Professional Values of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)- in particular:

- Value 1 - Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities
- Value 2 - Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity to learners
- Value 4 - Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice.

You are encouraged to take this opportunity by making explicit reference to the UKPSF in your teaching philosophy statement.

Your draft teaching philosophy statement will be about 500 words long.

Peer reviewing a Teaching Philosophy Statement (TPS)

Consider the following questions when peer-reviewing a TPS:

- **Does the writer make clear what (s)he values?**
- Does the writer clarify what s/he thinks is important when learning in his/her discipline.
- Does the statement indicate how the writer wants to contribute to the learning experience, beyond merely informing learners?
- **Are the writer's teaching objectives clear, attainable and realistic?**
- Is the statement clear and are illustrative examples used well?
- Is there any attempt to develop life-long learning skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, team working etc.?
- Are the writer's teaching methods explicit?
- **Does the statement display some knowledge of how learners learn and relevant theories?**
- Are any examples given of specific strategies or techniques used to encourage learning and what theories underpin these?
- Does the statement reveal anything about how the writer makes decisions about what to include in the learning environment (s)he creates?
- To what extent does the writer adapt their approaches to meet the needs of the diversity of students they teach?
- **How does the teacher measure effectiveness?**
- Apart from the prescribed University system (SET/SEM) for gathering information, what other methods does the writer mention?
- Does the writer's evaluation regime link to what (s)he is trying to achieve with learners? (For example, if problem-solving skills are aimed at, what tasks test this?).

Revising your Teaching Philosophy Statement (TPS) using Peer Feedback

At the *Teaching Dialogue Module Workshop* you will receive feedback on your draft TPS from two colleagues. Afterwards you will consider their comments and alter your original statement in the light of their comments and your experiences since writing your TPS draft.

A common issue that arises is **a lack of clarity in how your beliefs connect to your teaching practice**. If this is the case, you might find it helpful to discuss this with a colleague as an attempt to explore where there are hidden assumptions that you are not making explicit.

If there are gaps in your understanding about the nature of learning in your discipline area, visit the 'Disciplines' area of the Higher Education Academy website:

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/disciplines> to look for material relevant to your subject.