

Diversity Statements



What are they?

Diversity statements usually are no more than two pages and speak to your experience and capabilities working with people from different backgrounds. Often this pertains to teaching and service, so diversity statements usually focus on your experience teaching students from diverse backgrounds, teaching diverse or sensitive topics, or participating in service activities that benefit people from minority groups. Keep in mind that diversity can mean a number of things including race/ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and military veteran status among others.

When are they used?

Diversity statements will be listed explicitly as required documents in some job applications. You also may include them as an optional supporting document for job applications that do not explicitly ask for them, so long as you do not exceed page limits or supplant other more important documents that would better elevate your candidacy. If you are applying to a job at an institution where diversity is of prime importance (e.g., an HBCU, a university that caters to veterans), it may be a good idea to include a diversity statement, even if it is not required.

Example | A diversity statement for a professor position in Humanities at a research-intensive university

The experience of teaching a highly diverse student body has played an important role in shaping my own teaching methods and style. As a graduate student at UCLA, I taught for four years as an instructor in the Advanced Academic Placement (AAP) program, which was designed for first-generation college students coming from underrepresented communities. In this program students came from a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds, and there were also a number of students who identified as queer, students with physical and learning disabilities, non-traditional (older) students, and veterans. Working in the AAP program taught me how to negotiate the complex racial, gendered, and generational dynamics that can arise in a classroom setting – ranging from mediating in-class arguments and debates, to noticing who remains silent during these discussions, and how to create an environment that might encourage them to express their ideas. It taught me how to pinpoint some of the differences between rushed or lazy writing and the writing of a student with a learning disability, and taught me how to develop some strategies for helping students write a focused academic argument.

In addition to teaching, I am currently on the development committee for the AP English Literature exam, and in this capacity I advocate for a diverse range of texts and authors in the passages and questions selected for the test. Taken by nearly 400,000 high school students every year, the AP English literature exam also can affect the curricula of any number of high school literature courses, promoting diversity at the secondary school level.

At UCSD, I would continue to contribute to campus diversity in teaching, research, and service. In terms of instruction, all of the courses that I am currently teaching (as well as those I am in the process of developing) would qualify for the university's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion requirement. I would find it rewarding to work in a mentorship capacity with undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented populations through participation in programs like the McNair Scholars or Competitive EDGE. More informally, I'd be happy to meet with and advise student social or cultural groups at UCSD, like the Asian and Pacific Islander Student Alliance and the Hawaii Club. Finally, UCSD's rich opportunities for interdisciplinary research would provide new avenues for engaging with questions and issues of diversity across disciplines; in turn, I look forward to sharing my own research and methods with colleagues and students across the university.

Begin with a general statement that you have experience.

Always use concrete examples and stories if you can.

Think about ways to speak not only to teaching and service, but outreach and research if possible.

Conclude by tying your fit to the institution by referencing their concrete programs and how you may contribute.