

Diversity Statement Guide

1. Grab Their Attention

The beginning of your essay should draw the reader in. The most successful diversity statements often begin with a poignant vignette from the student's experience or a pointed/insightful observation. It also may introduce your overall theme, e.g., "My background has made me resilient" or "The obstacles I have overcome reinforce my commitment to reaching my goals."

2. Define Your Diversity

Once you've grabbed the reader's attention, *be specific about your diversity and how you define or embody it.* Try to paint a picture for the reader to understand your diversity and its relevance in your life.

3. Describe How Your Diversity Impacted You or Presented Challenges

Outline for the reader *how your diversity has impacted your life, personal and/or professional growth, or presented challenges that you have had to, or are working to, overcome.*

Consider: How has your background impacted you? Does it drive you to work harder or differently in some tangible way? Does it shape the way that you approach life?

With respect to difficult challenges that you might have faced, always keep in mind that *your diversity statement is a tool for you to market yourself to the firm.* To that end, frame your statement in a largely positive way and highlight the good that might have come out of adversity. Framing your statement in a positive light demonstrates to the firm that you are able to surmount challenges to further your goals.

4. Connect Your Diversity with Your Career and the Legal Profession

Share your thoughts on how your background will inform your future career choices and professional growth. E.g., "These experiences drove me to law" or "The adversity that I overcame getting into law school inspires me to help others from my community follow this path."

Consider: Has your background led you to want to do something specific to promote diversity at your future firm or the legal profession generally? Does it positively impact how you help your colleagues? Does it connect to your decision to go to law school? Your preference for practice area or other expertise?

5. Conclusion

To close, tie everything together succinctly. *Conclude with 1-3 sentences about how your background connects with the position and/or firm that you're seeking.* If you can find a way to do so, relate your experience to work that the firm is already doing with regard to diversity and inclusion. Specifically connecting yourself to a firm's individual initiatives demonstrates a powerful interest in that particular firm, further strengthening your application.

Finally, don't forget to connect with an OCS advisor to receive individualized guidance on your draft!