

Guidelines for Writing a Teaching Statement

University of California, Santa Cruz, established as a research-intensive institution, maintains an enduring commitment to educational excellence. Recognized as an R1 university and member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), we are proud to also be recognized as both a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). A third of our students are low-income, and a third are the first in their family to attend and graduate from a four-year institution. We seek to hire scholars eager to advance our research mission while effectively and compassionately educating our undergraduate and graduate students. Our students hail from a variety of educational backgrounds, and we seek to hire faculty who can support the learning of all of our students, recognizing that these students have traveled different pathways and that one-size-fits-all instruction is not optimal for every student.

Our Chancellor has articulated a strategic goal of [advancing student success by improving retention and graduation rates and closing equity gaps](#). This goal is consistent with the [UC system wide goal of closing equity gaps by 2030](#) and the [2022 Compact with the Governor](#). In order to meet these ambitious goals, we need all our faculty working toward them, in full compliance with state and federal law, bringing in appropriate pedagogies to their classes to ensure all students' success. Thus, we seek candidates with experience and/or knowledge of evidence-based teaching practices that promote the learning of all students, and of academic and whole-person support of the variety of students that enroll at UC Santa Cruz.

A teaching statement is an opportunity to share your knowledge and experience about teaching that could support the goals of our campus, the UC system, and the state. When we review teaching statements, we are looking for the following components:

- Discussion of teaching and mentoring philosophy
- Teaching experience (classroom, lab, studio, field class), demonstration of teaching effectiveness, and future plans for teaching
- Mentoring experience, evidence of effectiveness, and future plans for mentoring
- Experience in teaching and mentoring students from a range of social, cultural, and educational backgrounds

Search committees will assess the teaching statements in applications using a rubric. They may use the [campus starting rubric](#), or they may modify this rubric for a specific search (if so, the modified rubric will generally be linked in the job posting). Providing specific, reflective examples will strengthen your statement considerably.

Discussion of Teaching and Mentoring Philosophy

A teaching philosophy should describe a motivation and approach to teaching and mentoring. It may discuss goals for student learning, methods for instruction or mentoring to help students obtain those learning goals, methods for assessing student learning outcomes, and approaches for creating a learning environment attentive to the strengths and challenges students bring to their studies. An effective statement also recognizes the range of experiences and strengths students bring to their studies and explains how your approach adapts to those differences. A statement may be self-reflective and should communicate a commitment to effective teaching. An example of guidance for discussing a teaching philosophy is [here](#).

Teaching Experience

Formal teaching includes standard classroom experience as the instructor of record, in both large lecture and small class formats, as well as teaching in a lab, studio, or field course. Formal teaching also includes experience as a teaching assistant, which is relevant experience, particularly when the applicant has not yet been an instructor of record. Teaching may include course design, instructional methods, and assessment of student learning outcomes. Teaching experience may also include community-engaged teaching. It is helpful to include evidence of teaching effectiveness, if possible. We are also interested in your future plans for teaching. What classes are you qualified to teach? How can you contribute to the instructional needs of the department? Do you plan to engage with the campus pedagogical community? What sort of instructional approaches do you plan to take in your classes?

Mentoring Experience

Mentoring includes both formal and informal individual supervision. Formal research supervision includes undergraduate independent studies, senior theses, master's projects, and doctoral dissertations. Teaching supervision includes the supervision of teaching assistants, graders, or tutors. Informal mentoring can vary widely and can include advising a student on course selection, navigating an application process, navigating a program, navigating a bureaucracy, and navigating interpersonal dynamics in an educational setting, among many other scenarios. The approach and methods used in mentoring may be based on those that research has found to be most effective. Effective mentoring goes beyond formal academic supervision, encompassing advising, interpersonal guidance, and whole-person support. High-quality mentoring yields measurable outcomes—academic achievement, professional advancement, personal growth—and demonstrates responsiveness to individual student needs. It is helpful to discuss specific examples, reflecting on your impact, and outline how you will develop mentoring strategies at UC Santa Cruz.

Experience in Teaching and Mentoring Students from a Range of Social, Cultural, and Educational Backgrounds

Given UC Santa Cruz's commitment to educational fairness, faculty play an essential role in addressing academic outcome gaps among students from varied backgrounds, including

first-generation college students, Pell-grant eligible students, and those who attended under-resourced high schools. The university seeks faculty who can effectively enhance student achievement and provide support aligned with educational fairness and compliance with state and federal laws.

Students at UC Santa Cruz arrive with unique strengths and challenges shaped by their individual experiences. Effective teaching and mentoring approaches must acknowledge and thoughtfully address these individual differences. This involves demonstrating a clear understanding of varied educational contexts, using teaching methods supported by educational research, and continuously engaging in professional development to enhance teaching efficacy. The statement should show an understanding of the importance of context, and the ability to articulate the problem that actions aim to address. An effective statement can also illustrate a willingness to learn and adapt as one engages in professional development around evidence-based pedagogies. Emphasizing continual self-education, self-growth, and reflection signals a genuine commitment to the UC Santa Cruz and University missions. A strong statement will provide concrete and detailed examples of past experiences teaching and mentoring students from different social, cultural, and educational backgrounds, leveraging the strengths they bring, with discussion of the approaches and methods used, as well as the outcomes achieved. The efforts may include creating a welcoming and productive classroom environment, use of evidence-based pedagogy such as active learning, explicitly clarifying unspoken academic expectations, updating curricula to better reflect experiences from a range of social and cultural backgrounds, and implementing tailored mentoring approaches that acknowledge, affirm and support all students holistically.