

# Teaching Statements



## What is a Teaching Statement?

A Teaching Statement is a purposeful and reflective essay about the author's teaching beliefs and practices. It is an individual narrative that includes not only one's beliefs about the teaching and learning process, but also concrete examples of the ways in which he or she enacts these beliefs in the classroom. At its best, a Teaching Statement gives a clear and unique portrait of the author as a teacher, avoiding generic or empty philosophical statements about teaching.

## What Purposes does the Teaching Statement Serve?

The Teaching Statement can be used for personal, professional, or pedagogical purposes. While Teaching Statements are becoming an increasingly important part of the hiring and tenure processes, they are also effective exercises in helping one clearly and coherently conceptualize his or her approaches to and experiences of teaching and learning. As [Nancy Van Note Chism](#), Professor Emerita of Education at IUPUI observes, "The act of taking time to consider one's goals, actions, and vision provides an opportunity for development that can be personally and professionally enriching. Reviewing and revising former statements of teaching philosophy can help teachers to reflect on their growth and renew their dedication to the goals and values that they hold."

## What does a Teaching Statement Include?

A Teaching Statement can address any or all of the following:

- *Your* conception of how learning occurs
- A description of how *your* teaching facilitates student learning
- A reflection of why *you* teach the way you do
- The goals *you* have for yourself and for your students
- How *your* teaching enacts your beliefs and goals
- What, for *you*, constitutes evidence of student learning
- The ways in which *you* create an inclusive learning environment
- *Your* interests in new techniques, activities, and types of learning

"If at all possible, your statement should enable the reader to imagine you in the classroom, teaching. You want to include sufficient information for picturing not only you in the process of teaching, but also your class in the process of learning."

– Helen G. Grundman, [\*Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement\*](#)

## General Guidelines

- Make your Teaching Statement **brief** and **well written**. While Teaching Statements are probably longer at the tenure level (i.e. 3-5 pages or more), for hiring purposes they are typically **1-2 pages** in length.
- Use **narrative, first-person** approach. This allows the Teaching Statement to be both personal and reflective.
- Be **sincere** and unique. Avoid clichés, especially ones about how much passion you have for teaching.
- Make it **specific** rather than abstract. Ground your ideas in **1-2 concrete examples**, whether experienced or anticipated. This will help the reader to better visualize you in the classroom.
- Be **discipline specific**. Do not ignore your research. Explain how you advance your field through teaching.
- **Avoid jargon** and technical terms, as they can be off-putting to some readers.  
Try not to simply repeat what is in your CV. Teaching Statements are not exhaustive documents and should be used to complement other materials for the hiring or tenure processes.
- Be **humble**. Mention students in an enthusiastic, not condescending way, and illustrate your willingness to learn from your students and colleagues.
- **Revise**. Teaching is an evolving, reflective process, and Teaching Statements can be adapted and changed as necessary.

## Reflection Questions To Help You Get You Started:\*

- Why do you teach the way you do?
- What should students expect of you as a teacher?
- What is a method of teaching you rely on frequently? Why don't you use a different method?
- What do you want students to learn? How do you know your goals for students are being met?
- What should your students be able to know or do as a result of taking your class?
- How can your teaching facilitate student learning?
- How do you as a teacher create an engaging or enriching learning environment?
- What specific activities or exercises do you use to engage your students? What do you want your students to learn from these activities?
- How has your thinking about teaching changed over time? Why?

*\*These questions and exercises are meant to be tools to help you begin reflecting on your beliefs and ideas as a teacher. No single Teaching Statement can contain the answers to all or most of these inquiries and activities.*

## Exercises to Help You Get You Started:\*

- [The Teaching Portfolio](#), including a section on teaching statements, Duquesne University Center for Teaching Excellence. *This website includes five effective exercises to help you begin the writing process*
- [Teaching Goals Inventory](#), by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross and their book *Classroom Assessment Techniques*. *This "quiz" helps you to identify or create your teaching and learning goals.*

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# Evaluating Your Teaching Statement

[Writing A Statement Of Teaching Philosophy For The Academic Job Search](#) (opens as a PDF), The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan.

*This report includes a useful rubric for evaluating teaching philosophy statements. The design of the rubric was informed by experience with hundreds of teaching philosophies, as well as surveys of search committees on what they considered successful and unsuccessful components of job applicants' teaching philosophies.*

## Further Resources:

### General Information on and Guidelines for Writing Teaching Statements

- [Writing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement](#), Faculty and TA Development at The Ohio State University. *This site provides an in-depth guide to teaching statements, including the definition of and purposes for a teaching statement, general formatting suggestions, and a self-reflective guide to writing a teaching statement.*
- [Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement](#), Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Iowa State University. *This document looks at four major components of a teaching statement, which have been divided into questions—specifically, to what end? By what means? To what degree? And why? Each question is sufficiently elaborated, offering a sort of scaffolding for preparing one's own teaching statement.*
- [Writing a Meaningful Statement of Teaching Philosophy](#), McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning at Princeton University. *This website offers strategies for preparing and formatting your teaching statement.*

### Articles about Teaching Statements

- Grundman, Helen (2006). [Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement](#) (opens as a PDF), *Notices of the AMS*, Vol. 53, No. 11, p. 1329.
- Montell, Gabriela (2003). [How to Write a Statement of Teaching Philosophy](#), from the Chronicle Manage Your Career section of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Montell, Gabriela (2003). [What's Your Philosophy on Teaching, and Does it Matter?](#), from the Chronicle Manage Your Career section of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.