

Teaching/Research Statements Postdoc Workshop

Teaching statements should be SEPARATE from research statement

- Even research institutions want to know about your teaching history/aims/abilities
- Use aspects of research statement in teaching statement to expound upon how you can incorporate the relevant research in the classroom

Teaching statements should be brief!

- 1-2 pages double-spaced. More than a few paragraphs, but brevity is key.
- Avoid bullet points, unless you expound upon them in the statement
 - Example: I research [blank]; I taught [blank]; etc. Then elaborate enthusiastically how that skill/experience can aid your teaching

Teaching statements are especially important when applying for a position at a small department

- Big classes with big enrollment means money for institution/university
- Intro classes are key:
 - Some students take them as a requirement; however, it could spark interest, which leads to majors and builds the department
 - Recruiting majors means you have a greater pool for masters and graduate students within the department

Create a thorough teaching statement that delves deeper into your goals for teaching:

- What makes a good teacher?
- What techniques do you like? Why
 - Techniques like “Flipping the classroom” (students read at home to prepare, and then do homework in class supervised by the professor)
- What part of the techniques work/don’t work in your opinion/experience?
- Why teach? How can you relay scientific relevance?
- Where do you see your students succeeding?
 - Most students will not remain in academia – what jobs can they expect/work toward
 - How can those who enter academia as a career succeed – what institutions/jobs are readily available
- What will help the department gain a large pool of graduate and masters students?
- Can you manage a lab?
 - Manage and delegate both undergrad and graduate students
 - What shows your strengths in personnel management and student interactions?

RESEARCH INSTITUTION/UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT AND COURSES

- What courses can you teach?

- What levels? (undergraduate/graduate/seminar)
- What courses can you teach?
- What courses do they lack that you could teach
 - Is there a niche course that the department is missing
 - Specialized seminars?
- What teaching experience do you have (don't exaggerate)?
 - TA, graduate/undergraduate mentorship, leading seminars/workshops

Do not worry if you have no teaching experience. Instead:

- Focus on enthusiasm to teach (not just research)
- Focus on your ability to expand as a teacher
 - Are there courses outside of your comfort zone that could benefit department and your research?
 - Can you create/teach a course that will combine sub subjects of the department?
 - Can you open up a new world of cutting edge science to students?
- Focus on broader perspective of the importance of teaching
- Research/express openness to different teaching techniques
 - Again, research techniques
- Convey your genuine interest in the field and how you can influence students
- Express interest in specific classes that they offer, and how you can create an engaging atmosphere for both those with a budding interest in the subject and those that simply need the credit

PROOF READ

- Have peers and mentors from different fields review your statement
 - Is it accessible to those outside of the field?
 - Can you convince the entire department that you are an asset?
- Grammar is KEY

When preparing for the interview:

- Many universities will require a teaching seminar
 - Can you clearly explain your subject to a large audience of varying experience with your expertise?
 - Can you engage with a large audience?
 - Can you show your personality?
- Many will also require a smaller seminar to elaborate on your sub focus within the field
 - Can you articulate the nuances of your research?
- Many institutions will explain which subjects and/or how many you are expected to teach
 - If they don't, do not be afraid to ask
 - What classes do they need?
 - How many courses per year

- How are courses divided (intro classes vs. smaller seminars and specialized classes)

When you land the job:

- Choose classes you WANT to teach yearly, especially in pre-tenure
 - With all your pre-tenure requirements it is difficult to prepare a new course each every year
- Do not fail to publish and continue research because of teaching
 - Prioritize your research, because teaching has a deadline, but research is self driven and can fall to the wayside
 - Teaching vs. research is a time game
 - Try to create specific (small) windows of time in which you can prepare your course while still continuing research
 - Example: only begin course preparation 36 hours before class – deadline will drive your effort
- Be aware that there are many resources to create a course schedule
 - Books often come with exams/powepoints/etc.
 - Professors who formerly taught that class will often lend resources/notes/tests/etc.
 - Be careful not to plagiarize