

Guidelines for Discussing DEI in Your Self-Statement

Regents Policy 4400 states that “Because the core mission of the University of California is to serve the interests of the State of California, it must seek to achieve diversity, inclusion, and accessibility among its student bodies and its employees.” The policy goes on to enjoin that, “Diversity should also be integral to the University’s achievement of excellence. Diversity can enhance the ability of the University to accomplish its academic mission.” This document offers guidance for faculty who choose to include discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their self-statement as part of their academic personnel materials¹. While the Academic Personnel Manual (APM) does not require the inclusion of DEI contributions for advancement or promotion, these guidelines are intended to support those who wish to articulate and highlight their efforts in this area.

What does UC Merced mean by DEI?

Diversity: The variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender and gender expression, age, religion, class, language, abilities/disabilities, neurodiversity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, geographic region, and more (see [UC Regents Policy 4400](#)).

Equity: The commitment to providing all individuals with the resources, opportunities, and support they need to reach their full potential, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstance. Equity acknowledges structural issues and barriers such as racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, transphobia, ageism, and sexual harassment that have historically limited the full participation of individuals from marginalized groups. It involves recognizing and addressing structural inequalities and barriers that inhibit equitable access and outcomes. In contrast, equality involves treating everyone the same, often without regard to differing needs or circumstances. While equality aims for uniform treatment, equity strives for fairness by tailoring support to meet diverse needs and achieve comparable opportunities for all. In academia, equity involves fostering inclusive environments that cater to the diverse needs of the community, ensuring that every member – students, faculty, and staff – has the necessary tools to thrive both academically and professionally. Equity is about intentional effort and continuous assessment to promote fairness in processes, practices, and policies, enabling every individual to contribute to and benefit from our collective endeavors.

Inclusion: The intentional effort through personnel actions, programs, and policies to create environments where all individuals feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued. It extends beyond mere presence or diversity by actively engaging all members, embracing their unique contributions, and fostering an environment where diverse perspectives are solicited and valued. Inclusion involves creating spaces where differences are celebrated, communication is open, and participation is encouraged. It emphasizes the importance of psychological safety, where individuals can express themselves and their ideas without fear of negative consequences, allowing them to be their authentic selves. In academic settings, inclusion means integrating diversity into the

¹ Parts of these guidelines are adapted from [UC Irvine’s guidance for writing inclusive excellence activities statements](#)

curriculum, decision-making processes, and social activities, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered in shaping the educational experience and community life. True inclusion results in a dynamic community where innovation, engagement, and productivity flourish, and is supported by an atmosphere where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

Addressing DEI in your Self-Statement

According to the University of California Academic Personnel Manual (APM) APM 210-1d and APM 210-3, contributions in all areas of faculty achievement that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and equal opportunity should be given due recognition in the academic personnel process, and they should be evaluated and credited in the same way as other faculty achievements. These contributions to diversity, equity, inclusion, and equal opportunity can take a variety of forms including efforts to advance equitable access to education and public service that addresses the needs of California's diverse population, or research in a scholar's area of expertise that highlights inequality. Mentoring and advising students and faculty members, particularly from underrepresented and underserved populations, should be given due recognition in the teaching or service categories of the academic personnel process.

Discussions of DEI in your self-statement may explain your contributions to DEI and inclusive excellence in the areas of research/creative activity, teaching, and service throughout those sections or as a separate section.

It is most useful when the contributions to DEI discussions in a self-statement include *specific* examples of your DEI activities.

Strong DEI Discussions

- Clearly address DEI contributions in research, teaching, and service: clear understanding, track record, and plans
- Demonstrate sophisticated thinking about the underrepresentation of groups in academia and structural barriers to success (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.)
- Provide detailed information about DEI activities, including your specific role in the activity and its outcomes
- Contain descriptions of multiple efforts rather than only one or two
- Have an established track record

Less Effective DEI Discussions

- Include vague or simplistic statements about DEI without describing specific activities in the area (e.g., "diversity is important for the success of science")
- Describe participating in DEI only peripherally
- Merely point to the diverse student body in your courses or research groups (rather than displaying how you, as a faculty member, have proactively supported those students)
- Simply listing names of mentees without explaining your specific DEI efforts in their training, recruitment, and/or retention

- Refer to expected work such as writing letters of recommendation for traditionally marginalized students

When composing your DEI statement, describe *actions* you have taken to support and advance DEI activities in the areas of research/creative activity, teaching, and service. The following guidelines address how to do so for each of the faculty's responsibilities.

DEI-Oriented Achievements Related to Research and Creative Activities

Describe your scholarly/creative work that includes advancing underrepresented groups and addressing issues of injustice, diversity, and inclusion. Contributions may include but are not limited to:

1. Investigating a problem disproportionately impacts underserved communities.
2. Addressing barriers facing underrepresented groups in access to education, healthcare, economy, social mobility, or participation in creative endeavors
3. Studying and amplifying programs to understand and enhance patterns of participation and advancement of underrepresented groups
4. Creating knowledge of diverse cultural and historic experiences, particularly in reference to underrepresented groups
5. Forming research teams that integrate perspectives from underrepresented scholars, and including these scholars in published work

DEI-Oriented Achievements Related to Teaching

Describe activities you engage in that contribute to creating an academic environment supportive of all students, including those from underrepresented groups. Contributions may include but are not limited to:

1. Using or developing pedagogies addressing different learning needs:
 - Designing or teaching courses that are tailored to the needs of underrepresented groups and/or educationally disadvantaged students
 - Development of particularly effective strategies for the educational advancement of students in various underrepresented groups
 - Creating more inclusive courses in terms of subject matter
2. Mentoring underrepresented students:
 - In a research group or laboratory
 - Through programs such as UROC, internships, and independent studies
 - Including your specific recruitment/retention efforts and how you tailor your mentorship to meet their needs
3. Selecting course content to appropriately reflect diverse viewpoints, including work from scholars from underrepresented groups:
 - Incorporating more diverse scholars into syllabi
 - Inviting underrepresented scholars to guest lecture
 - Engaging with multiple worldviews and issues in classes
 - Including material that helps students develop an awareness and ability to address DEI issues in the field

DEI-Oriented Achievements Related to Service

Describe your department, school, university, and systemwide activities that promote DEI opportunities for scholars, staff, and/or students from underrepresented groups. This could include but is not limited to:

1. Organization of, or engagement in, seminars, conferences or institutes that address concerns of underrepresented groups
2. Service on committees directed at serving underrepresented communities and advancing inclusive excellence
3. Presentations or performances for underrepresented communities
4. Recruitment, retention, and/or mentoring of underrepresented students, faculty, or staff at the university or to the professoriate more generally
5. Participation in programs aimed at increasing the pipeline of underrepresented groups entering higher education
6. Public service activities and invitations to give talks within your field that address the needs of culturally diverse and/or traditionally marginalized groups
7. Awards and other forms of special recognition such as commendations from local or national groups or societies representing underserved communities
8. Service on organizations, boards, or community groups dedicated to advancing access and equity.

Knowledge, Understanding, and Future Plans for Advancing DEI

Additionally, you may briefly articulate how your engagement with DEI issues across your professional work has led to:

- Knowledge of, experience with, and interest in dimensions of diversity that result from different identities
- Familiarity with demographic data related to diversity in higher education
- Understanding of the challenges faced by underrepresented individuals, and the need to identify and eliminate barriers to their full and equitable participation and advancement
- Future goals for advancing DEI in your work and how you plan to continue making contributions