



Research Statements and Proposals

An Introduction for Humanists and Social Scientists

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Agenda

- Statements vs. Proposals
- Writing the Research Statement
- Writing the Research Proposal
- What the Committees Seek
- Samples and Discussion



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The Ask

- “a **statement** of research/scholarship interests”
- “a **proposal** not to exceed 1,500 words, double-spaced, describing the general scope of the project and the specific work proposed during the fellowship term”
- “a **statement** of current and future research plans”
- “a brief **summary** of your research interests”
- “a **statement** of plans for work and their relation to the community’s theme”
- “research **statement** of the project to be undertaken during the fellowship period”
- “a **description** of research activities”
- “a research **plan** of no more than 2000 words”



**What kind of position
are you seeking?**

**Who is your
audience?**



Statements vs. Proposals

	Research Statement	Research Proposal
Purpose	To apply for tenure-track professorships and VAPs	To apply for predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships
Scope	Describes past, present, and future scholarship	Proposes project(s) to be completed during a set time period
Topics	Research overview; Past research; Current research; Future research	Research Questions; Argument; Methodology; Timeline; Outputs
Length	1.5 to 2 pages (HUM & SS) 2 to 3 pages (PSYCH)	Varies



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Research Statements

FORM &
FORMAT

- Usually **2 pages** in length
- **Research Statement** and your name centered at the top
- **Single spaced**, with double spacing between paragraphs
- **1"** margins and **11-12 pt.** font
- Use **subheadings** for at-a-glance organization
- **First-person** point of view, with your research as the main character
- **Frame** your work appropriately, but **do not** make the statement position-specific



Research Statements

STRUCTURE
& CONTENT

Once Upon a Time



Research Statements

STRUCTURE
& CONTENT

- ¶ Provide an **overview** of themes, topics, and disciplinary identity

- ¶ (Optional) Describe **past research** and publications, if applicable

- ¶ Describe **current research** (dissertation): questions, argument, sources, theory, methodology, findings
- ¶ Describe **current research** (dissertation): contributions, significance, publication trajectory

- ¶ Describe **future research**, likely a distinct second project

- ¶ Conclude with the **significance** and **wider impacts** of your work



**But won't I be
repeating my
cover letter?**



Statement vs. Cover Letter

- A research statement **expands** on the cover letter
- It provides more **detail** on arguments, methods, and contributions
- Can include **brief** (one- to two-sentence) dissertation chapter summaries*
- Greater focus on the **future**
- Repeat ideas but **do not recycle** full sentences

** Check disciplinary norms.*



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Research Proposals

FORMAT &
APPROACH

- **Formats vary**, so refer to the call for proposals
- Draw upon the same mindset and skills that you used for past grant/fellowship proposals
- Assume a broad, **multidisciplinary audience**
- **Tailor** the proposal to each opportunity, speaking to postdoc themes when necessary
- Show why you want to be on a given campus and how you will **contribute**
- Provide an ambitious yet feasible **plan of work**, with concrete deliverables



Research Proposals

SAMPLE AD

The Center for East Asian Studies at Stanford University is pleased to offer a postdoctoral fellowship in **Chinese Studies** for the **2018-19** academic year. This award is open to scholars in the **humanities and social sciences** studying any historical period. The fellowship will begin September 1, 2018 and end August 31, 2019, with a 12-month stipend of approximately \$60,000. Fellows are required to be **in residence** in the Stanford area during the appointment period; to **teach one course** during the academic year; and to **participate in all regular Center activities**. Stanford University Press will have first right of refusal for **manuscripts** produced during the postdoctoral appointment.



Step 1: Catch the readers' attention by beginning with a **PROBLEM**

- Widely recognized and unresolved
- Practical or conceptual
- Related to the fellowship's theme

Step 2: Demonstrate that your research provides a **SOLUTION**

- Outline core arguments, methodologies, and findings
- Emphasize scholarly contributions and interventions
- Show that the \$\$\$ allows you to do important work

Step 3: Discuss the **OUTCOMES** of your time at an institution

- Feasible month-by-month plan*
- Publications and presentations are key
- Contributions to campus, especially teaching



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**What will search
committees want
to see?**



Focus



Independence



Productivity



Impact



Fit



A Clear Plan



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Questions?

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