

Writing Personal Statements for Faculty Evaluations¹

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These guidelines are intended to help faculty members write personal statements that articulate their goals for teaching, research and original creative work, as well as the strategies they have used to achieve their goals. Personal statements prepared for promotion and tenure reviews provide an important opportunity for faculty members to reflect on the contributions they make to their students, the literature of their field, and their profession. Personal statements are also an important assessment tool that can be used by faculty review committees and administrators in evaluating faculty performance. Annual evaluations and third-year reviews can also include personal statements as part of the process.

Variations in personal statements for teaching, research and original creative work, and service will exist as a result of differences in faculty assignments. The content included in one faculty member's personal statement might not apply to another faculty member's statement and would be omitted. Examples of content that might be omitted include curriculum development, using teaching to enhance research and original creative work, or using service to enhance research and original creative work. The content organization of each statement should follow the order presented below.

Potential Content for Statements on Teaching

- Effectiveness of Course Delivery
 - How your approach to instruction is congruent with the typical needs of your students.
 - How you foster student achievement by balancing high standards for performance with appropriate levels of support.
- Course Content
 - How your course content has contributed to the attainment of knowledge and skills needed by your students.
 - How you ensure that your course content, including instructional resources that you have developed, is congruent with current knowledge and professional practice.

¹ This paper is intended to be used along with *Successful Faculty Performance in Teaching, Research and Original Creative Work, and Service*; *Self-Evaluation of Faculty Work in Teaching, Research and Original Creative Work, and Service*; and *Using Personal Statements in Faculty Evaluations*. (Citations for these documents are available in the reference section of this paper.)

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- Course Development⁴
 - How your development of courses has contributed to the attainment of knowledge and skills needed by your students.
- Curriculum Development
 - How your development of specializations, majors, distance learning programs, certificate programs, or degree programs has contributed to the attainment of the knowledge and skills needed by your students.
 - For faculty members in departments with professional degrees (such as education, law, medicine, nursing, psychology, and social work), how your curriculum development contributed to the accreditation or re-accreditation of a degree program.
- Management of Multiple Course Sections
 - How your management of multiple course sections has contributed to the availability and quality of instruction provided to students.
- Mentoring and Academic Advisement of Students
 - How your work in mentoring and academic advising contributes to your students' professional identity and the development of skills in research and original creative work.
- Using Research and Original Creative Work to Enhance Teaching
 - How you have used your research and original creative work to improve your instruction (courses, directed individual study, and supervised research).
 - How you have involved students in your research and original creative work.
- Using Service to Enhance Teaching
 - How you have used your professional association work to keep your courses up-to-date with current knowledge and practice.
- Additional Evidence on Teaching
 - Add any additional evidence as appropriate.

⁴ The meaning of some of the terminology used in this paper has been clarified in the additional information section of this paper. These terms include: course development, curriculum development, managing multiple course sections, research, original creative work, program of research, focus of original creative work, and academic program.

Potential Content for Statements on Research and Original Creative Work

- Quality of your Research and Original Creative Work
 - How your research or creative activity contribute to your field of study or creative endeavor.
- Programmatic Nature of your Research and Focus of your Original Creative Work
 - How your individual projects have contributed to your program of research or focus of original creative work.
- Sustainability of your Research and Original Creative Work
 - How your research shows promise for ongoing publication and external funding, or how your original creative work shows promise for ongoing exposure and external funding.
- Productivity in Research and Original Creative Work
 - How the strategic decisions you made about publishing and presenting your research, or publishing, performing, and exhibiting your original creative work, has contributed to your productivity.
- Using Teaching to Enhance Research and Original Creative Work
 - How discussions with your students have been used to explore potential research questions, or helped you to explore various artistic themes or media of expression.
- Using Service to Enhance Research and Original Creative Work
 - How your service to professional associations has provided opportunities to further your program of research or the focus of your original creative work.
 - How your consulting has provided opportunities to further your program of research or the focus of your original creative work.⁵
- Additional Evidence on Research and Original Creative Work
 - Add any additional evidence as appropriate.

Potential Content for Service Statements

- Nature of your Service to the Program, Department, School, College, and University
 - How your service contributions relate to ongoing or emerging needs of the institution.
 - For senior faculty, how your efforts to mentor tenure-earning faculty have contributed to their development.

⁵ Consulting can provide a good opportunity to create research questions or stimulate original creative work as faculty members reflect on the outcomes of their consultation. Consultation that does not relate to a faculty member's program of research or focus of original creative work is less likely to result in relevant questions for future studies.

- Nature of your Service to the Profession
 - How your service contributions relate to ongoing or emerging needs of the profession.
- Nature of your Service to Society
 - How your consulting has contributed to meeting needs identified in your community, state, nation, and other countries.
- Using Teaching to Enhance Service
 - How your teaching has contributed to the provision of continuing professional development offerings in your field.
- Using Research and Original Creative Work to Enhance Service
 - How your expertise in research and original creative work has contributed to your professional organization.
 - How your research expertise has contributed to being an editorial board member for a refereed journal or a federal grant review committee, or how your creative expertise has contributed to being a juror or judge for a performance or exhibit.
 - How your expertise in research or original creative work has contributed to your program, department, school, college, and university.
- Additional Evidence on Service
 - Add any additional evidence as appropriate.

Additional Information

Course Development

Course development refers to creating a new course or making substantive revisions, such as developing a distance learning component or Web-based learning resources.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum development includes designing new courses, distance learning programs, certificate programs, majors, and degree programs. Curriculum development does not include the normal ongoing development of an existing course.

Management of Multiple Course Sections

Management of multiple course sections involves coordinating the ongoing design, development, and delivery of instruction for a course having several sections that are taught by various faculty members, graduate students, or adjunct faculty. Responsibilities typically include leadership in development and/or selection of course materials, revision of course content based on evaluations, selection of instructors, and arrangement of instructional technology for the course. When the course is taught by graduate students or adjunct faculty members, regular supervision and evaluation of instructors may be involved.

Research and Original Creative Work

Research includes various scholarly efforts designed to examine questions of scientific, social, literary, or artistic importance by obtaining, analyzing, and interpreting data that can guide future research and in some cases lead to application of the findings and the refinement of public policy. Research contributions are most often made through publications and conference presentations. **Original creative work** includes various imaginative and innovative contributions that can have artistic, social, and economic value. Examples of original and creative work include novels and novellas, short stories, poems, scripts, screenplays, musical compositions, musical arrangements, choreography, performances, production and design for performances, visual art, interior design, apparel design, edited works, Internet Web site development, computer software development, and inventions.

Program of Research or Focus of Original Creative Work

A **program of research** involves a systematic investigation of related elements of a topic over a period of time. A **focus of original creative work** involves the exploration of related artistic themes or media of expression over a period of time. Having one or two clear and consistent programs of research or foci of original creative work makes it more likely that faculty members will achieve their goals and make substantive contributions to their field. The synergy inherent to programmatic research helps faculty members gain insights and specialized expertise that would not be possible if their research were conducted on a variety of unrelated topics. Programmatic research builds on the prior research of faculty members, as well as students and other researchers. Programmatic research also provides greater visibility for a faculty member as other researchers note the consistent contributions of the faculty member in publications and conference presentations. Similar advantages exist for having a thematic focus for original creative work. However, a program of research or focus of original creative work should not be restrictive. Serendipity resulting from new funding options, technology, or other developments may provide new opportunities that should not be ignored.

A faculty member typically has only one or two programs of research that typically evolve or change over time. The same is true for original creative work. The two can be distinct or related in various ways. A program of research statement or focus of creative work statement can reflect current work, past work, or both. A statement is typically no longer than one or two sentences. The following example shows a faculty member having a single program of research: “Examine the influence of extracognitive factors (beliefs, emotions, culture) in shaping the teaching and learning of science.” In this second example, the faculty member has two programs of research: “Examine the content and process of career decision making using a cognitive information processing approach, and then apply the knowledge gained to designing and delivering cost-effective career resources and services. Also, examine the design and appropriate use of information and communication technology in the delivery of assessment and information resources as well as counseling and guidance services.” An example of a focus of original creative work statement is as follows: “Explore the interaction among light, composition, and subject matter in expressing mood in still life photographs.”

Program

A **program** is a unit within a department responsible for specific degrees, majors, specializations, or certificate programs.

References

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