# CHS Guidelines for Writing a Diversity and Inclusion Statement on Syllabus

## Rationale and Background

Inclusion and diversity, essential to VCU’s mission, embrace principles that “link diversity, inclusion, and equity to how students are taught’ and “integrate diversity into disciplinary content and teaching practices” (VCU, Quest 2025, Theme 1).

Commitment to diversity and inclusion can be conveyed to students by a diversity and inclusion statement on your syllabus and all faculty in the CHS should include such a statement. This statement communicates to students your pledge to have an inclusive and welcoming classroom. The statement can facilitate meaningful dialogue and establish a climate of appreciation and respect for all students. An inclusion and diversity statement also shows that you are aware of current local, state, and national events and campus conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion. We recommend discussing this statement on the first day of class as you review your syllabus with students.

## Writing the Diversity and Inclusion Statement

The diversity and inclusion statement does not have to be complicated or lengthy but should reflect values, beliefs, and commitments around diversity and inclusion. Departments may choose to provide a diversity and inclusion statement template that can be modified by instructors, and examples are provided below. Or, individual faculty may choose to develop their own using these guidelines. See our faculty colleague, Dr. Ching-Yu Huang's statement below as an example. In general, your statement should speak to why being inclusive matters to you, specifically, and how that relates to your discipline, course, and desired classroom climate. It should also be inclusive of different types of diversity, including, but not limited to: race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, religion, and disability.

As you develop your statement, here are some additional questions to consider adapted from [Brown University Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning](https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/statements) and [Carnegie Mellon Eberly Center](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/syllabus/checklist/diversitystatement.html).

1. How do you, concretely, recognize and value diversity in your classroom? Do you have systems that ensure everyone's voice will be heard? Do you have guidelines for respectful discussions?
2. How can diversity – as represented in your discipline, course content, and classroom – be an asset for learning?
3. How will issues related to diversity arise in your course and classroom? And, how will you handle them (ideally) when they do? For instance, does your discipline or course content explicitly or implicitly raise sensitive or controversial topics related to diversity and inclusion?
4. Do you seek input from your students on classroom climate (i.e., to what extent they feel included and how)?
5. What relevant resources exist on campus that could be useful to your students?

Please contact Faye Belgrave, Associate Dean for Equity and Community Partnerships, at fzbelgra@vcu.edu if you have questions.

## Examples of Diversity and Inclusion Statements

[VCU Office of the Provost. Diversity and Inclusion Syllabus Statement](https://provost.vcu.edu/faculty/faculty-resources/syllabus/)

I want you to know that I am grateful for your presence and input in our classrooms (whether in person or online). I appreciate and welcome you regardless of your immigration status, country of origin and/or citizenship, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender/sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or dis/ability. Thank you for enriching our world, sharing your vital experience, and contributing to the diversity that makes our intellectual community vibrant and evermore creative.

[Robertson School's Diversity and Inclusion Syllabus Statement](https://robertson.vcu.edu/about/diversity/)

It is vital that students in this course, with guidance from the instructor, broaden their journalism/mass communications experiences by including in their course work people and subjects such as ethnic, racial, and religious minorities, people with disabilities, the disadvantaged, gay men, and lesbians and other similar groups. This includes but is not limited to developing a sensitivity to language and images that may create an appearance of bias. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community and that students are exposed to diverse ideas and perspectives. In this class, it is the responsibility of the instructor and students to foster an environment that supports free expression.

The VCU Robertson School of Media and Culture is committed to diversity in all aspects of its program, including providing a climate of inclusion, as well as addressing student and faculty hiring and retention, curriculum, research, and scholarship, and outreach and service. Students are encouraged to review the School’s Diversity Plan, which is posted on the School’s website.

[Dr. Ching-Yu Huang, VCU, Diversity Statement on Syllabus](https://docs.google.com/document/d/17xazhLs69ZtSU3K_lyhOVE-oydxAQeeF2fF6tGi9qN4/edit)

For the first time walking on the VCU campus, I instantly felt that this Ram family is where I belong. Seeing students like you walk by, I saw my young self in them, i.e., me the first gen, the Asian, the international student, the promising young woman, the immigrant, and someone who loves science, etc. The fact that VCU is one of the most diverse higher education institutions in Virginia promotes an atmosphere that welcomes me. To embrace such diversity, I want my students (that’s YOU) from all diverse backgrounds to be recognized and your perspectives to be well-served in this course. I love teaching biology and ecology. However, much of science we learned has been historically built on a small subset of privileged voices and based on *subjective* experiences. We need to change the narrative! To ensure a more comprehensive understanding of ecology, I am building an inclusive, equitable learning environment that (1) supports your learning needs both in and outside of classroom, (2) honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) and (3) integrates a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences that you bring to this class. I am making an effort to present course materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. To help accomplish this, your suggestions (in person, electronically or anonymous feedback) are encouraged and appreciated. I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups. *Together, we are stronger*!

[Diversity Statement for Course Syllabi Texas A&M Anthropology Department](http://cte.tamu.edu/getattachment/Faculty-Teaching-Resource/Diversity-and-Inclusion/Inclusion-Statements-Syllabus-Handout.pdf.aspx?lang=en-)

Respect for cultural and human biological diversity are core concepts of Anthropology. In this course, each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute to class discussion. Please respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by your fellow students and instructor, and refrain from derogatory comments about other individuals, cultures, groups, or viewpoints. The Anthropology Department supports the Texas A&M University commitment to Diversity, and welcomes individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disabilities, education, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experience, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and work experiences.

[Respect for Diversity Syllabus Statement, Iowa, College of Education](https://education.uiowa.edu/services/office-dean/policies/syllabus-checklist)

 It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

For further information on writing diversity and inclusion statements see:

* [VCU, CTLE Guide to Writing Anti-Racism Syllabus Statement](https://docs.google.com/document/d/18Akx1w4Uq-JgbabN2-_cro5bbXY5Nxhl6MPG-WjGwxo/edit)
* [Brown University Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning](https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/statements)
* [Carnegie Mellon Eberly Center](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/syllabus/checklist/diversitystatement.html)