

**Recommendations for Writing and Evaluating DEI Statements for Academic Specialists’
Annual Review and Promotion
SSC Academic Specialist Ad hoc committee ***

In keeping with Michigan State University’s (MSU) values of collaboration, equity, excellence, integrity, and respect, and its commitment to inclusive excellence, academic specialists going through annual review and seeking promotion in the College of Social Science (SSC) are asked to provide evidence of the academic specialist’s contribution to MSU’s [diversity, equity, and inclusion mission](#). An academic specialist’s contribution to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) can take several forms including efforts to advance equitable access to education, continuous training and service that addresses the needs of MSU's diverse population, research that highlights inequalities, mentoring and advising minoritized students, mentoring and supporting minoritized academic specialists, and the equitable implementation of policy and procedure. In alignment with [MSU’s affirmative action/equal opportunity statement](#), we recognize the importance of understanding the intersectionalities of members of our community. The term minoritized is used to be broadly inclusive of the identities listed in the affirmative action/equal opportunity statement. Academic specialists and their evaluators can use the suggested categories of evaluation and the enumerated activities in each section as a starting point to assess an academic specialist’s contributions to advancing MSU’s DEI mission. Academic specialists are not necessarily expected to have contributed to all areas listed since most academic specialists are not assigned to all categories. In addition, the list below is not exhaustive, as each academic specialist contributes to MSU in very diverse ways. The document instead serves as a guide for preparing, developing, and evaluating DEI statements.

Suggested categories of evaluation:

Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceptional
=	=	=	=
little to no effort in equity work on the part of the academic specialist in any of the relevant areas.	doing your job, equity work with individual students, faculty, community work, organizations.	doing your job, equity work providing significant leadership to a formalized program.	shaping institutional /systemic change= contributing to efforts that strengthen institutional policy and practice

Advising: The academic advising category includes individuals who provide advisement on course options and other academically related matters. These academic specialists have responsibilities in an academic department, school, or college or in a unit that serves University-wide populations

* An ad hoc College of Social Science Academic Specialist committee (Nwando Achebe, Catherine Foley, Sarah Handspike, Veda Hawkins, Heather Wilson) was convened by Nwando Achebe to produce recommendations for the writing and evaluating of DEI activities for annual review and promotion of continuing academic specialists.

(e.g., Supportive Services, Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative, Honors College). [Academic Specialist Handbook](#) **A.5.1.1 ADVISING**. When evaluating DEI accomplishments in advising, the evaluation committee and the academic specialist should consider the following questions:

Does the Academic Specialist:

EXCEPTIONAL

- Make significant professional contributions to DEI, such as conducting workshops or delivering papers or lectures that develop best practices for ethical engagement with minoritized communities?
- Assume leadership roles involving the sustained mentorship, support, supervision, and training of new minoritized academic specialists?
- Proactively mentor minoritized students over a sustained period of time?

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

- Implement effective strategies to ensure minoritized students are provided equitable opportunities for success?
- Establish relationships with other units in the University to make appropriate referrals? (e.g., when a minoritized student has a concern that the academic specialist is unable to fully address)
- Advise students to take courses taught by minoritized faculty to either a) increase majority students' awareness of the diverse world we live in; or b) facilitate opportunities for mentorship and support for minoritized students?
- Collaborate with minoritized academic specialists from other units on how to best serve minoritized students?
- Create and facilitate activities devoted to the success and retention of minoritized students?
- Participate in DEI focus professional development activities, both on and off campus, including conferences, workshops, and seminars?
- Articulate the advising needs of minoritized students in department/school, college, and University level DEI committees?

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- Use theory to inform best advising practice for minoritized students? (e.g., asset-based approaches to recognize students' unique strengths and use those strengths to the student's advantage; intersectionality theory to identify invisible barriers and provide alternatives for those students)
- Understand and validate student experiences of harm, including microaggressions and stereotype threat?
- Proactively advise minoritized students?
- Ensure minoritized students know they are valued, belong, and matter?
- Create a safe and inclusive environment that is open, accessible, and encouraging to minoritized students?

- Identify on campus DEI resources and trainings and encourage students to avail themselves of those opportunities?
- Consider financial constraints when advising students toward degree completion and discuss financial aid and scholarship opportunities to decrease those limitations?
- Inform themselves of current events/issues that impact minoritized students?
- Increase advising appointment accessibility to minoritized student populations by offering a variety of appointment types? (e.g., in-person, online, phone call) and times (e.g., accommodate time zones for international students and work schedules for students needing to work full-time)
- Show support for the career and graduate school goals of minoritized students by providing support in letters of recommendation for minoritized students?
- Give equitable opportunities for minoritized students to earn awards and recognition within the department and college?
- Effectively communicate the value and importance of DEI related courses and training to majority students, faculty, and staff? (e.g., DEI, Relationship Violence & Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) mandatory trainings).
- Encourage students with disabilities to contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) to apply for Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) so students can have access to accommodations?
- Participate in activities devoted to the success and retention of minoritized students?
- Use best practices in providing accommodations, assistance, and guidance to minoritized students reentering programs from recess, dismissal, and/or time off school?

Teaching: The academic specialist in this category is involved significantly in providing instruction for credit in classes, labs, seminars, practical and clinical settings. [Academic Specialist Handbook](#)
A.5.1.2 TEACHING. When evaluating DEI accomplishments in teaching, the evaluation committee and the academic specialist should consider the following questions:

Does the Academic Specialist:

EXCEPTIONAL

- Create programs that provide access and/or establish a pipeline into the discipline for minoritized students?
- Make significant scholarly DEI focus contributions in relevant subject areas?
- Make significant contribution to the advancement of best practices in inclusive pedagogies and is so recognized by professional peers?

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

- Include readings and resources authored by minoritized scholars?
- Include readings and resources that amplify the voices of diverse groups?
- Develop students' ability to practice cultural humility?
- Provide opportunities for active engagement with inclusivity?
- Develop effective teaching strategies to ensure students are given equitable opportunities for success?

- Incorporate DEI connections into the curriculum?
- Supervise and mentor minoritized undergraduate students for an extended period of time?
- Mentor at-risk students and minoritized students?
- Supervise and mentor minoritized Teaching Assistants?
- Have evidence of teaching effectiveness, including techniques which meet the needs of minoritized students?
- Engage in opportunities to learn more about DEI in the classroom setting? (e.g., Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives (OI3), Academic Advancement Network (AAN), the MSU Hub for Innovation in Learning and Technology (HUB))

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- Create an inclusive learning environment that is open, accessible, and encouraging to all students?
- Create a safe classroom space where students from diverse backgrounds feel empowered to express their ideas?
- Not place responsibility on minoritized students to speak on behalf, and be the authoritative voice of their own groups?
- Expose students to new perspectives on cultures, beliefs, and practices?
- Invite scholars from minoritized groups to make presentations in class?
- Include a DEI statement in their syllabus?
- Demonstrate flexibility in working with students of all learning styles?
- Provide flexibility in their availability to support students during and outside prescribed office hours?
- Understand the expense and accessibility of various resources that they require for class?
- Make resources available on reserve in the university library?
- Support the purpose of RCPD VISAs? e.g.,
 - Provide language on syllabus, and during the first week of class, welcoming students with VISAs to turn them in at the beginning of the semester?
 - Provide language on syllabus, and during the first week of class, encouraging students with disabilities to contact RCPD to get a VISA?
 - Provide accommodations based on the terms of the VISA?

Curriculum Development: The curriculum development category includes individuals who plan courses or curricula. Usually, such responsibilities are undertaken by individuals appointed in colleges, departments, and schools. [Academic Specialist Handbook A.5.1.3. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT](#). When evaluating DEI accomplishments in curriculum development, the evaluation committee and the academic specialist should consider the following questions:

Does the Academic Specialist:

EXCEPTIONAL

- Significantly contribute DEI focus research in relevant subject areas or pedagogy related to curriculum development and planning?

- Lead efforts to center DEI in their unit's curriculum structure? (e.g., increase DEI focus course offerings and minors)
- Lead the evaluation of DEI focus requirements in the unit's undergraduate and graduate programs?
- Design and implement tools to assess DEI focus student learning outcomes in the curriculum?

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

- Participate in DEI focus committees and curricula planning at the unit, college, and university level?
- Hire specialists with previous DEI experience?
- Lead efforts to incorporate DEI related curriculum development into onboarding materials for specialists?
- Gather curricula and course materials related to DEI to assist in curricula development efforts?
- Participate in the evaluation of DEI focus requirements in the unit's undergraduate and graduate programs?
- Identify literature on minoritized communities for inclusion in courses and academic programs?
- Help design tools to assess DEI related student learning outcomes in the curriculum?
- Include information related to DEI learning outcomes and provide support resources for students on your syllabi?
- Participate in the development of courses that support minoritized student success? (e.g., research, implement, teach, and develop)
- Participate in the development and evaluation of assessment techniques and procedures that take into consideration different learning styles?

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- Find creative ways to support minoritized students in large service courses to decrease opportunity gaps?
- Participate in the development of instructional materials that represent diverse voices?
- Develop an understanding of different learning styles that support inclusivity, and implement them within the department's curriculum structure?
- Participate in professional development activities, both on and off campus, including conferences, workshops, and seminars to enhance abilities and knowledge in DEI curriculum development?

Research: The academic specialist appointed in this functional area facilitates scholarly research activity of a national and international stature appropriate for a premier land-grant, AAU university. These individuals must perform a lead role on research projects, including developing grant proposals and directing the research project with the designation as principal investigator and/or in performing position responsibilities which require a terminal degree. [Academic Specialist Handbook](#) **A.5.2 RESEARCH**. When evaluating DEI accomplishments in research, the

evaluation committee and the academic specialist should consider the following questions:

Does the Academic Specialist:

EXCEPTIONAL

- Receive external funding or grants for DEI focus work?
- Supervise and mentor minoritized undergraduate students in DEI engaged research projects?
- Develop new forms of ethically engaged DEI focus research? (e.g., inclusive of digital expressions)
- Develop tools that honor the perspective of minoritized communities?
- Develop best practices for ethical engagement with minoritized communities in research/scholarship?
- Develop DEI focus research and workshops that impact minoritized communities and inform policies?
- Contribute significantly to the design and execution of DEI focus experiments and research projects?
- Collaborate with and support minoritized faculty in the pursuit of research endeavors?
- Serve as editor for DEI focus journals or other publications?
- Maintain a sustained record of important contributions to DEI focus research? (e.g., reports, monographs, books, or other publications)

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

- Conduct independent DEI focus research as a principal or co-principal investigator on external funding or grants?
- Present DEI focus research at professional conferences or to academic leadership in and outside MSU?
- Make scholarly contributions to literature or the practice of advancing equitable access and diversity?
- Engaged in research opportunities with individuals historically excluded from their disciplines?
- Produce research that seeks to improve the lives of underserved communities and promote that knowledge?
- Develop partnerships with minoritized communities within and outside MSU?
- Seek external funding/grant opportunities for DEI focus work/collaborations?
- Secure resources necessary for DEI focus research projects?
- Serve on minoritized graduate students' guidance committees?
- Create equitable research opportunities for minoritized (under)graduate students (e.g., discourage use of traditional evaluative criteria)?
- Recognize invisible voices (minoritized communities) and promote those perspectives in research?
- Author books, manuscripts, reports, and other scholarly instruments focused on diverse communities/topics?
- Serve as a consultant to DEI focus research projects in their professional field?

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- Ensure that research teams have diverse voices?
- Analyze and interpret DEI focus data?
- Encourage undergraduate students to be engaged in research projects?
- Promote and collaborate in research projects with minoritized scholars and communities?
- Model openness to different methods of research that are grounded in an understanding of the minoritized communities being studied?
- Participate in DEI focus programs supportive of minoritized undergraduate students (e.g., Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP))?
- Ensure learning spaces and tools are safe and accessible to all (e.g., management, operation, and/or maintenance of facilities, laboratories, computer systems or bureaus)?

Service/Outreach: The academic specialist appointed in this functional area facilitates service/outreach activities of state, regional, and national stature appropriate for a premier land-grant university. While the service/outreach mission of this University originated in the area of agriculture and the mechanic arts, this emphasis now has broadened to encompass fields such as health, human relations, business, communications, education and government, and extends to urban and international settings. [Academic Specialist Handbook A.5.3 SERVICE/OUTREACH](#). When evaluating DEI accomplishments in service/outreach, the evaluation committee and the academic specialist should consider the following questions:

Does the academic specialist:

EXCEPTIONAL

- Lead recruitment, retention, and mentoring of minoritized scholars and students?
- Respond to outreach requests from minoritized communities?
- Develop best practices for ethical engagement with minoritized students (e.g., conduct workshops, deliver papers or lectures)?
- Author DEI focus resource materials for distribution to the public (e.g., computer programs, books)?
- Develop or receive high impact external grants with diverse communities on topics relevant to those communities?
- Receive and manage DEI focus grants to carry out service and outreach programs and projects?
- Provide leadership and coordination of DEI focus service and outreach programs to majority and minoritized communities?
- Assume significant roles in DEI facing professional societies?
- Obtain recognition within the University, college, professional groups for DEI work?
- Serve as editor for DEI focus publications?

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

- Write DEI focus grants to carry out service and outreach programs and projects?
- Conduct needs assessments to better understand the realities and needs of diverse communities?

- Help recruit, retain, and mentor minoritized scholars and students?
- Present good practices for ethical engagement with diverse communities, on and off campus (e.g., seminars, lectures, workshops, training)?
- Present DEI focus research at professional conferences or to academic leadership in and outside of MSU?
- Execute, monitor, evaluate and/or report on DEI focus service and outreach programs to majority and minoritized communities at MSU and off campus?
- Support the advancement of individuals from minoritized groups in the candidate's field?
- Participate in service and outreach that strives to dismantle barriers for people historically excluded from opportunities?
- Implement research findings to meet the needs of minoritized communities? (e.g., develop service and outreach programming)?
- Support faculty, students, and unit stakeholders in the development of DEI service/outreach programs (e.g., collaborate, supervise, train, consult)?
- Serve as reviewer for DEI focus grants?
- Distribute relevant research findings and technical information for practical application to minoritized students, professionals, and unit stakeholders?
- Participate in unit, college, and university-level DEI focus committees and curricula planning?

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- Contribute to furthering diversity and equal opportunity at MSU, their profession, and communities at the local, state, national, and international levels?
- Develop resources for service and outreach with individuals historically excluded from their discipline?
- Engage in service and outreach to DEI focus groups (e.g., student clubs, private organizations, community groups)?
- Tangibly promote a university environment where diversity is welcomed, fostered, and celebrated?
- Help produce inclusive service and outreach materials? (e.g., promotional materials)?
- Engage in service and outreach relevant and meaningful to diverse populations?
- Transfer DEI focus information, knowledge, and expertise from MSU to the general public?
- Advocate for DEI initiatives or for minoritized students' success?
- Ensure learning spaces and tools are safe and accessible to all (e.g., management, operation, and/or maintenance of facilities, laboratories, computer systems or bureaus)?
- Collaborate with other universities, organizations, and the general public to develop DEI focus programs?
- Serve as editor for DEI focus newsletters?
- Respond to requests from marginalized institutions and organizations regarding DEI focus programs?

Administrative Responsibilities: An individual appointed in the Academic Specialist Appointment System, in accordance with the Guidelines for Specialist Placements, may also serve in administrative roles related to their functional assignments as an academic specialist. This may involve significant responsibilities in promoting and contributing to the efficient and effective management of the applicable unit or program with the related responsibility of attracting and managing resources, funding, material and/or people to achieve unit/program goals and to maintain administrative accountability. [Academic Specialist Handbook A.6 ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY](#). When evaluating DEI accomplishments in administrative work, the evaluation committee and the academic specialist should consider the following questions:

Does the academic specialist:

EXCEPTIONAL

- Mentor minoritized specialists? Including,
 - Support their professional development?
 - Increase their awareness of opportunities to advance in their field?
- Secure funding or resources to execute sustainable DEI focus work (e.g., to support their team's training, programming, attendance at conferences, guest speaker series, etc.)?

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

- Mentor and support minoritized undergraduate and/or graduate students over an extended period of time (e.g., STAR Program)?
- Create DEI focus programming?
- Provide DEI focus professional development opportunities to other majority and minoritized academic and support staff?
- Create and implement a long-term strategic plan for their functional area that supports minoritized students, academic staff, and faculty?

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- Model behaviors that set a tone for inclusive workplace environments (e.g., listen to others when they speak, ensure minoritized individuals have a voice, use preferred pronouns, and correct microaggressions in the office)?
- Increase awareness and selection of minoritized students for curricular and co-curricular opportunities (e.g., honors programs, scholarships, fellowships, assistantships)?
- Work closely with minoritized students to help them successfully navigate MSU's bureaucracy in order to ensure students are given equitable opportunities for success?
- Assist continuing and fixed term minoritized populations in their work?
- Create opportunities in their unit to expand cultural knowledge regarding minoritized populations? (e.g., provide information about minority holidays and religious programming; recognize and appreciate minority cultural celebrations; provide meaningful ways to explore and learn during Heritage Months)
- Recruit and hire minoritized undergraduate and/or graduate students?

- Understand, acknowledge, and recognize minoritized staff and faculty whose invisible labor supports fellow minoritized co-workers and educates non-minoritized co-workers?
- Recruit, hire, mentor, and support academic specialists from minoritized populations?
- Create and implement an annual plan for their functional area that supports minoritized students, academic staff, and faculty?
- Assure processes and procedures are transparent for minoritized students, academic staff, and faculty.