

Strengths & Weaknesses Writing Examples by Position

Remember: The goal of writing Strengths and Weaknesses is to ensure that an external reviewer of the search can see why a selected candidate was chosen. Specifically, it is to ensure equal opportunity and to adhere to the expectations of the Connecticut’s Affirmative Action regulations.

Helpful Tips:

- For first-round committees, remember the goal is to present the most qualified individuals to the second-round interviewers.
- For second-round committees, consider using the other aspects of the search (e.g., resume, cover letter, first-round evaluations, etc.) in supporting your final decision.
- ECR’s feedback is not designed to be overly obstructive but is to ensure compliance as we write the narratives. Many searches are written up, and our front-loaded due diligence is to ensure that when the plan is written, all necessary information is gathered accordingly.
- Refrain from using subjective language and nominal/ordinal interpretations of assessments. Additionally, candidates should only be evaluated against the job specifications, and not each other.

In the examples below, you will see positions spanning levels (e.g., Executive/Management, Professional Non-Faculty, Faculty, and Classified) and how the thematic approach can be applied.

Levels of detail consistent with Deficient Levels of Detail and Slightly Better Level of Details are not acceptable under the Affirmative Action Regulations and will require expansion and/or reworking.

Position	Theme	Deficient Level of Details	Slightly Better Level of Details	Acceptable Level of Details
Campus Dean of Faculty	Leadership (Questions 4, 7, and 9)	<p>Strength: Candidate seems like a strong leader.</p> <p>Weakness: Didn’t sound confident.</p>	<p>Strength: Candidate described leading a curriculum redesign project.</p> <p>Weakness: Candidate gave limited detail on managing resistance.</p>	<p>Strength: Demonstrated strategic leadership by detailing how they led a curriculum redesign involving 12 departments, including forming a cross-functional committee and setting measurable milestones. Candidate explained how they secured buy-in by presenting data on student outcomes.</p> <p>Weakness: When asked about managing dissent, provided only a general statement about “listening to concerns” without describing specific actions or outcomes, suggesting a development area in conflict resolution strategies.</p>

Custodian	Reliability & Teamwork (Questions 3, 6, and 10)	<p>Strength: Candidate seems dependable.</p> <p>Weakness: Didn't answer well about teamwork.</p>	<p>Strength: Candidate shared an example of consistently meeting cleaning schedules.</p> <p>Weakness: Candidate struggled to explain how they assist coworkers during absences.</p>	<p>Strength: Provided a clear example of completing all assigned cleaning tasks ahead of schedule during a campus event, and proactively reported a maintenance issue that prevented disruption.</p> <p>Weakness: When asked about covering for absent team members, candidate mentioned "helping when needed" but did not describe specific actions or coordination, indicating a development area in collaborative problem-solving.</p>
Instructor of English	Communication & Instructional Skills (Questions 2, 5, and 7)	<p>Strength: Candidate is a great communicator.</p> <p>Weakness: Didn't give strong examples of student engagement.</p>	<p>Strength: Candidate explained how they adapt lesson plans for diverse learners.</p> <p>Weakness: Candidate gave minimal detail on fostering discussion in class.</p>	<p>Strength: Shared a detailed example of adapting a Shakespeare unit for ESL students by incorporating visual aids and interactive group activities, demonstrating inclusive teaching practices.</p> <p>Weakness: When asked about facilitating classroom dialogue, candidate referenced "encouraging discussion" but did not provide concrete strategies or outcomes, suggesting a development area in active engagement techniques.</p>
Financial Aid Specialist II	Customer Service & Problem-Solving (Questions 5, 7, and 8)	<p>Strength: Candidate seems very customer-focused.</p> <p>Weakness: Didn't do great on conflict question.</p>	<p>Strength: Candidate shared an example of resolving a student's aid issue promptly.</p> <p>Weakness: Candidate struggled to explain handling of escalated complaints.</p>	<p>Strength: Gave a specific example of assisting a student who was at risk of losing aid due to incomplete documentation, explaining how they walked the student through the process, verified forms, and expedited submission to meet the deadline.</p> <p>Weakness: When asked about handling escalated complaints, candidate only stated "I stay calm and listen" without describing steps taken or outcomes, indicating a development area in structured de-escalation techniques.</p>

Things to keep in mind:

1. Please do not regurgitate from the interviews. Focus on details and examples supporting the justifications, rather than the dialogue.
2. Confidentiality, even in the writing of Strengths and Weaknesses is critical to ensuring a recruitment’s success.
3. ECR’s feedback is intended to prompt further expansion based on the documentation already provided. Remember that the necessary level of expansion is dependent on what was originally submitted. It is always easier to remove things than add things during the process.

Category	Best Practice	Refrain From
Language	Use clear, objective language tied to job duties.	Avoid vague phrases like “seems dependable” or “great communicator.”
Examples	Provide specific actions and measurable outcomes (e.g., “Led a 12-department curriculum redesign”).	Do not include one-line strengths or weaknesses without context.
Focus	Evaluate candidates against job specifications only.	Do not compare candidates to each other.
Confidentiality	Maintain confidentiality and avoid quoting interviews verbatim.	Do not copy dialogue or resume text directly.
Compliance	Ensure examples support equal opportunity and Affirmative Action standards.	Avoid subjective impressions or assumptions about personality traits.