

Preparing for the Market

The suggestions in this handout will help you create a job search plan that will enhance your success on the faculty job market. Please note, however, that the faculty job search varies widely across disciplines.

MAKE YOURSELF MARKETABLE (THROUGHOUT GRADUATE SCHOOL)

- Get some teaching experience.
 - If possible, try to teach undergrads and grad students.
 - Consider teaching at different types of institutions.
 - If TA opportunities are not available, seek alternative teaching roles. Become an adjunct instructor, volunteer to guest lecture, give scholarly presentations, etc.
- Make progress on your research.
 - Having your dissertation near completion when applying enhances your marketability.
 - Publish and present your work at the university, regional, and/or national level.
- Increase your visibility and your network.
 - Attend professional conferences.
 - Volunteer to serve on professional committees.

CLARIFY YOUR DESIRES (THROUGHOUT GRADUATE SCHOOL)

- Do you really want to become a faculty member?
- Be aware of your biases and the biases of your faculty members. For example, some individuals may feel that teaching at anything other than a major research university equals failure.
- Learn more about what it's really like to be a faculty member at different types of schools.
 - Interview faculty or alumni who have taught at various institutions. Ask them how they spend their time, what they like about their jobs, what challenges they face, etc.
 - Review job postings for different types of schools to see how positions are described.
 - Enroll in GRDSCH 630 - Exploring Faculty Careers (spring quarter)
- Think about what kind of institution would truly be the best for you.
 - Research university, liberal arts school, community college?
 - Secular, private independent, private religious?
 - Undergraduate school or graduate-degree granting school?
- Where in the country are you willing to move?
- What is your Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C?
- Think about job prospects for your partner.
- Listen to your gut. Follow your instincts.

RESEARCH THE JOB SEARCH TIMELINE IN YOUR FIELD (YEAR BEFORE YOU APPLY)

- Find out if your department or disciplinary organization keeps an archive of former job postings.
 - Review former postings to find out (1) what kind of information is available in job descriptions, (2) what materials are typically asked for in the application packet, (3) when deadlines and decision points typically occur.

- Find out if there is an annual cycle for which you need to be ready.
 - Do search committees like to conduct interviews at certain annual conferences?
 - When are tenure-track positions typically posted? Sabbatical replacements? Post-docs?
- If possible, participate in the activities of a search committee in your department so you can see the faculty job search from the other side.

ASSESS YOUR READINESS (SIX MONTHS BEFORE YOU APPLY)

- Do you really feel ready to move from the student role to the faculty role? Search committees want to hire forward-thinking professionals...not students!
- Are you making progress on your dissertation? What is your dissertation timeline? Will you finish before applications are due, before you interview, before you start your faculty job?
- How does your advisor feel about your readiness?

PREPARE YOURSELF MENTALLY (SUMMER BEFORE YOU APPLY)

- Think of the job search process as an adventure and a learning experience.
- Realize that the job search will consume a huge chunk of your time over the next year.
- Develop strategies to manage your time and stress, and to keep your energy level high.
- Understand that you may not secure a position the first year.
- Practice detachment. Everyone gets rejected. Also, much of what happens during the job search process is not about you. Maximize control over the aspects that are in your control.

CREATE A SUPPORT NETWORK (SUMMER BEFORE YOU APPLY)

- Maintain regular communication with your advisor and faculty members who may be writing your letters of recommendation.
- Connect with other graduate students who are on the faculty job market (both in your department and in other departments). Consider starting a job search group – meet together, help each other with application materials, and provide support.
- Talk to recent graduates and new hires.
- Seek support from partners, parents, and friends outside your discipline.

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS (SUMMER BEFORE YOU APPLY)

- Faculty job postings usually ask for a variety of documents, such as:
 - Curriculum vitae
 - Cover letter (aka Letter of Interest, Letter of Application, etc.)
 - Transcripts (sometimes from all undergrad and grad degrees)
 - Letters of recommendation (usually 3-5 letters) or a list of references
 - Research statement (aka Statement of Research Interests)
 - Writing sample/s (usually publications or chapters from your dissertation)
 - Teaching statement (aka Teaching Philosophy)
 - Teaching portfolio
 - Sample syllabi of classes you have taught
 - Sample syllabi of classes you want to teach
 - Teaching evaluations

- Attend Career Center seminars on faculty job search application materials.
- Start working on your documents early because they take time to prepare.
- Finish general drafts of your application materials and seek feedback on them.
- Provide documentation (CV, typical job description, research statement, etc.) to letter-writers so they can start drafting their letters of recommendation.
- Establish a Letter of Evaluation (LEO) file with the Career Center.
- Consider creating a personal website and posting your job search materials on it.

FIND THE JOB POSTINGS (TYPICALLY AUGUST TO DECEMBER - OR LATER)

- Start perusing job postings months before you are ready to apply.
- Always be on the lookout for jobs – not just during the peak cycles.
- Ask your professors to keep their eyes and ears open for job possibilities.
- Look at the job boards on professional association websites.
- Check out the conference interview possibilities.
- Look at many different faculty job boards (not just The Chronicle)
- Read job postings carefully. Figure out what skills and specializations are being sought.
- Don't apply for a position if you wouldn't seriously consider accepting it.

APPLY FOR JOBS (TYPICALLY SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER - OR LATER)

- Thoroughly research the departments to which you are applying.
- Revise your materials for each job posting.
- Have somebody carefully edit your materials before you send them!
- Remind your references that you need their letters of recommendation.
- Request multiple copies of your transcripts.
- Find a way to stay organized, especially if you're applying for multiple positions. Consider creating a spreadsheet and/or clearly-labeled electronic folders.
- Keep your advisor and other supporters informed of your progress.

PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS (TYPICALLY NOVEMBER TO APRIL - OR LATER)

- Continue applying for jobs.
- Attend the job talks of prospective UW faculty hires
- Attend Career Center seminars on the faculty interview and negotiation processes.
- Read literature on faculty interviewing.
- Start preparing answers to potential questions.
- Participate in mock interviews with peers, faculty members, or career counselors.
- Prepare a job talk and practice it with peers or faculty members.
- Research the departments with whom you have (or hope to have) interviews.
- Write a list of questions to ask prospective employers and keep it handy so you are ready when they call to invite you to interview.
- If you haven't already done so, buy at least one business suit.
- Write thank you notes to departments who interview you.

GET READY FOR NEGOTIATIONS (TYPICALLY FEBRUARY THROUGH SUMMER)

- Read information on faculty negotiations.
- Talk with faculty members about what and how to negotiate in your field.
- Decide what you need in an offer.
- Always negotiate.
- If you get a satisfactory offer:
 - Accept it. Sign your contract. Don't turn back. Celebrate your victory!
 - Let other schools know that you are no longer on the job market.
- If you don't get a satisfactory offer:
 - Don't despair. Continue looking.
 - Ask faculty how to make the best use of your time until you do secure a position.
 - Have your mentors help spread the word that you're still on the market.
- Thank everybody who helped you during your job search.

START YOUR NEW JOB (TYPICALLY JULY TO SEPTEMBER)

- Finish your dissertation.
- Pack up your things. Sell your house. Say your goodbyes.
- Seek support during the transition.
- Investigate new faculty resources at your new place of employment (mentoring programs, orientations, social support networks, etc).
- Enjoy your new life as a faculty member!

UTILIZE UW RESOURCES

- Discover the resources available to grad students at the UW Career Center:
 - <http://careers.washington.edu/gradstudents>
- Check out other helpful UW resources related to the academic job search:
 - Center for Instructional Development & Research - <http://depts.washington.edu/cidweb/resources/index.html>
 - GRDSCH 630: Special Topics in College / University Teaching – <http://depts.washington.edu/g630/>
 - Huckabay Teaching Fellowships - <http://grad.washington.edu/pff/huckabay.htm>
 - Field trips to community colleges, sponsored in conjunction with Preparing Future Faculty

PERUSE WEBSITES

- UW, <http://careers.washington.edu/GradStudents/Academic-Careers>
- UW, <http://depts.washington.edu/g630/>
- UC – Davis, <http://gsps.ucdavis.edu/AcademicCareerHelp.htm>
- UC – Berkeley, <http://career.berkeley.edu/PhDs/PhDAcademic.stm>
- UC – San Diego, <http://career.ucsd.edu/sa/gradpage.shtml>
- Stanford, <http://cardinalcareers.stanford.edu/communities/graduate/guides.html>
- Yale, <http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/careers/forms/Academic%20Job%20Search%20guide.pdf>
- Tomorrow's Professor, <http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/index.shtml>
- American Psychological Association, <http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/surviving/homepage.html>
- Re-Envisioning the PhD, http://www.grad.washington.edu/envision/phd/employment_index.html

- Interview Prep Videos, <http://www.9interviews.com/>
- Teaching Portfolios, <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/resources/portfoliotools.html>
- Dual-Career Couple Searches, <http://www.phds.org/jobs/the-two-body-problem>
- Salary Information, <http://chronicle.com/stats/aaup/>
- Science CVs, <http://chronicle.com/jobs/2000/03/2000033102c.htm>

READ BOOKS

- Vick, J. M., & Furlong, J. S. (2008). *The academic job search handbook* (4th ed). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Newhouse, M. L. (1997). *Cracking the academia nut: A guide to preparing for your academic career*. Cambridge, MA: Office of Career Services, Harvard University.
- Formo, D. M., & Reed, C. (1999). *Job search in academe: Strategic rhetorics for faculty job candidates*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Goldsmith, J. A., Komlos, J., & Gold, P. S. (2001). *The Chicago guide to your academic career: A portable mentor for scholars from graduate school through tenure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bushey, M. M., Lycan, D. E., Videtich, P. E. (2001). *How to get a tenure-track position at a predominantly undergraduate institution: Advice for those in the scientific fields*. Council on Undergraduate Research.
- Reis, R. M. (1997). *Tomorrow's professor: Preparing for academic careers in science and engineering*. New York: IEEE Press.
- Boss, J. M., & Eckert, S. H. (2006). *Academic scientists at work: Navigating the biomedical research career*. New York: Springer
- Feibelman, P. J. (1993). *A PhD is not enough: A guide to survival in science*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books.
- Figler, H., Kletzer, L. G., Schuster, J. H., & Katz, S. R. (1996). *The MLA guide to the job search: A handbook for departments and for PhDs and PhD candidates in English and foreign languages*. New York: Modern Language Association of America.
- Hume, K. (2005). *Surviving your academic job hunt: Advice for humanities PhDs*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Content in this handout was adapted from the following websites:
 - <http://careerdevelopment.brown.edu/phd/academic-careers>
 - <http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/careers/forms/Academic%20Job%20Search%20guide.pdf>
 - <http://cardinalcareers.stanford.edu/guides/grad.html>
 - <http://career.berkeley.edu/PhDs/PhDAcademic.stm>