

ACADEMIC CAREERS: PLANNING FOR THE MARKET

Throughout Graduate School

Get some teaching experience:

- If possible, try to teach undergraduate and graduate 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 Goals and Expectation

Make yourself marketable:

- 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 anywhere other than a 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
- Think about what kind of institution would truly be the best for you
 - Research university, liberal arts school, community college?
 - Secular, 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?
- Listen to your gut. Follow your instincts.

Assess Your Readiness

- 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?

Summer Before You Apply

Prepare yourself mentally:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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 or classes you want to teach
 - Teaching evaluations
 - Diversity statement (required for some positions)
- 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
- Consider creating a personal website and posting your job search materials on it

Typically August to December

Find the job postings:

- 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.

Apply for jobs:

- Don't apply for a position if you wouldn't seriously consider accepting it
- 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

Typically November to April - Or Later

Prepare for interviews:

- 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 nice interview outfit
- Write thank you notes to departments who interview you

Typically February through Summer

Get ready for negotiations:

- 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!
- 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

Typically July to September

Start your new job:

- Finish your dissertation
- If in another location, plan to pack up your things, sell your house, and say 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!

Additional Resources and Suggestions Utilize UW Resources

- Discover the resources available to grad students at the UW Career Center
<http://careers.uw.edu/gradstudents>
- Check out other helpful UW resources related to the academic job search:
 - o Center for Teaching & Learning - <http://www.washington.edu/teaching/>
 - o Research Commons - <http://www.lib.washington.edu/commons>
 - o Field trips to community colleges, sponsored by UW Graduate School's Core Programs - <https://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/core-programs/>

Peruse Other Websites

- American Psychological Association, <http://www.apa.org/careers/resources/academic/index.aspx>
- Salary Information, <http://chronicle.com/stats/aaup/>

Read Books

- Boss, J. M., & Eckert, S. H. (2006). **Academic scientists at work: Navigating the biomedical research career.** New York: Springer
- Buller, J. L. (2009). **The essential college professor: A practical guide to an academic career.** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Coghill-Behrends, W., & Anthony, R. (2012). **The PhD handbook for the academic job search: An owner's manual for finding jobs.** PhDBooks, LLC.
- Hume, K. (2010). **Surviving your academic job hunt: Advice for humanities PhDs.** New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kelsky, K. (2015). **The professor is in: The essential guide to turning your PhD into a job.** New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Vick, J. M., & Furlong, J. S. (2016). **The academic job search handbook (5th ed).** Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.