

**GRADUATE
STUDENT
SERIES**

ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH



do great things

cardinalcareers.stanford.edu

Doctoral Students Year of Candidacy: Guidelines for the Academic Job Search

As you enter your final year of doctoral work, many of you may be struggling with the demands of defending your dissertation or final research studies, continuing your work as a research assistant, and beginning the process of obtaining an academic job. The following timeline and suggestions can serve as a guide to help you manage your academic job search process.

Summer Quarter

Update your CV, general letter of application, and organize materials for a teaching portfolio.
Pick up a copy of the **CVs, COVER LETTERS, and TEACHING PORTFOLIOS** guide from the Career Development Center (CDC). Obtain feedback from faculty, mentors, and fellow students on creating a CV that contains the necessary information for your field of study. Make an appointment with a CDC counselor for further feedback.

Visit the CDC and obtain handouts to learn about helpful resources.

Obtain letters of reference.

This is a good time to contact past references and update letters. Consider using the Reference File Service at the CDC to store letters of reference: <http://cdc-records.stanford.edu/reference>.

Fall Quarter

Finalize one version of your CV as a template.

You may have several versions of your CV depending on the positions for which you are applying: research positions, teaching positions, endowed chairs, and other types of academic jobs.

Apply for positions.

Find these through your dissertation chair/advisor, departmental listings, CDC resources, professional conferences and organizations, and various internet web sites.

Continue to solicit letters of recommendation and update previous letters.

*Attend the CDC's **Academic Job Search Series** and other departmental and campus events.*
CV and cover letter writing, academic job talks, teaching portfolios, and on/off campus interviewing are usually covered here.

Meet with a CDC counselor for further resources.

Winter Quarter

Continue applying for positions.

Prepare and practice your academic job talk.

Practice interviews with peers, faculty, CDC counselors, and other supporters/mentors.

Spring Quarter

Continue applying for positions.

Tenure track and one year positions continue to be announced during this period.

Evaluate academic job offers and be sure to negotiate for time to carefully consider each offer.
Discuss negotiation strategies with your advisor, CDC counselors, and other personal resources.

*If you have not yet found a position, do not despair. You may wish to continue applying for jobs and it may take more than one year to find a position.

For counseling appointments, please call: (650) 725-1789

THE ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH: A PRACTICAL OVERVIEW

This guide is designed to give an overview of the typical stages and practical steps involved in seeking and obtaining a first faculty or academic research position. "Cultural" differences between humanities, education, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering disciplines may be noted, but undoubtedly there will be some conventions or practices unique to your discipline which are not addressed. This cautionary statement should encourage you to talk with faculty in your department (particularly with recently appointed faculty), with post-docs and with fellow students who have applied for positions in recent years.

What is The Right Setting for You?

Do You Want to Research, Teach or Both?

You may find that you are interested primarily in research, individual or collaborative, and that the right fit is a university where tenure depends on scholarly productivity and where there are large enrollments in doctoral programs. You may look forward to a balance of teaching and research, such as you would find at a public or private institution that confers graduate and professional degrees. You may be primarily interested in teaching and involving undergraduates in research, as you would do at a small private college. Knowing enough about your own preferences will help greatly in the busy months when you are trying to find your first position and simultaneously finish your dissertation or thesis writing and research.

What You Can Do Before You Become a Candidate

Although the demands of the last several years of doctoral work almost dictate an intense lifestyle of research and writing, it is important to balance this with other activities that will help you make important choices at or near the end of your program.

Seek frequent input from your advisor or committee. Planning will not only keep your research or dissertation moving along, but will provide the opportunity for informal "career planning" conversations. These faculty and others whom you respect will help you formulate ideas about the best fit for your first job following your degree, whether it is a post-doc, junior faculty or administrative position in academia, a research position at a national lab or private research facility, an administrative position in government, a foundation or other non-profit.

It also may be very valuable to take the time to talk with counselors at the Career Development Center (CDC) who work with graduate students. These counselors can help you explore your interests, your preferred ways of interacting with others, and define your goals and your priorities. Since they are not colleagues, nor are they involved in your profession, they may be able to present new objective viewpoints and possibilities for your career plans. They may also help clarify the many types of academic settings, and thus help you decide upon the right type of college, university, lab or institute for you.

How and Where To Learn About Positions -- Advertised and Unadvertised

The search process follows the academic calendar, with positions beginning the following fall and announced as early as the preceding summer. In some fields, major national or international conferences are held prior to the opening of the academic year and most institutions will not know if they have positions to offer the following year. There may be a placement service set up at such conventions to screen prospective candidates and establish a pool of possibilities. Some examples of early conferences are those in sociology, psychology and musicology.

Attending Conferences

In other fields, major conventions are held in December or during winter break, and the placement activities are one main focus of the meeting. Employment bulletins advertise openings in the fall, and candidates are invited on the basis of their application materials at brief screening interviews. These are conducted by several faculty from the hiring departments and are held at the conference sites.

From these interviews comes the "short list" of candidates who will be invited to campuses for one or two day interviews. Sometimes departments receive confirmation of their ability to offer a position too late to advertise in journals or employment bulletins, and will instead post announcements and interview signups at the conference placement center. Some of the fields that follow this pattern are languages and literatures, linguistics, philosophy, economics and history.

Still, other disciplines may have major conferences or technical meetings scheduled in the late fall or spring, with jobs announced from fall through spring. Interviewing may take place at the respective campuses in the early spring through summer, with positions sometimes not filled until mid-summer. Some of these conferences, too, will offer placement services with screening interviews. Examples are conferences in education fields, statistics, and some sciences. Some placement services allow candidates to submit curriculum vitae (CVs) prior to the conference for review by institutions before, after or during the conference. To be included in such a listing or job bank, a candidate may be charged a small fee. CVs usually must be short or must follow a particular format and must be submitted well in advance. Details will be found in conference programs. Associations may also publish a summary of job listings which can be reviewed at the conference or purchased for a small sum following the conference.

Using Employment Bulletins

Several times per year, most associations publish employment bulletins in which the great majority of available positions in the field will be listed. Examples are the Modern Language Association's (MLA) *Job Information List* and the *Spectrum* publication of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

In other fields, positions are listed in widely read monthly publications, such as *The APA Monitor*, *Science* and *Genetic Engineering News*. There is a list of selected professional associations at the end of this document. These associations publish employment notices in their journals or publish special employment bulletins.

Tapping Department Faculty and Other Sources for Job Announcements, Information

Search committees, department chairs, department administrators and university human resources departments often send job announcements to other universities to try to reach good candidates. Individual faculty members, affirmative action officers, graduate deans and career development centers receive announcements and make them available in various ways.

Stanford's CDC receives announcements of faculty, administrative and research positions in academic and quasi-academic institutions. These announcements can sometimes be found in the CDC Jobs database. The CDC Career Resource Center also carries some of the publications in which faculty positions of all disciplines are advertised. The most well-known of these are *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the education section of the classifieds in *The New York Times*, and *The London Sunday Times* (if looking internationally). There are specialty publications, such as *The Affirmative Action Register*. Finally, the CDC guide *Internet Resources* lists additional resources for finding academic jobs in a variety of fields in the United States and internationally.

The ratio of supply and demand in the academic profession appears to be changing as has been predicted for some time. Now some schools send "scouts" to other institutions in the fall to identify and attempt to recruit promising candidates, preempting the conference interviewing process, which often takes place at the winter break. Even visiting scholars or post-docs are sometimes pressed into service by their home institutions to suggest likely candidates among Stanford graduate students.

Preparing For the Job Market

If the foregoing suggests there will be a great deal of activity during the academic year in which you decide to become a candidate, then you have grasped the essential message underlying this guide. Try as much as possible to prepare yourself before fall arrives. Not the least of your preparation should be the psychological part. You should talk to other graduate students who have been in the job market before, ignore the worst stories, just as you ignore any comments that it was "easy and fun."

Taking Time When You Have No Time

Be prepared not to accomplish much on your research or dissertation during the intensive part of the application and interview process, which could be October through March or December through May/June, depending on your field. Don't berate yourself for this; the job you take may be where you will spend a long part of your life. It's worth the effort to look thoroughly and decide carefully. Even if you take a one-year position, what you learn about yourself and the job search process will make future job searching much easier. Recognize that you will be taking your ideas and intellect to conferences and campuses and sharing them with a wider audience of peers and superiors than you have done so far. This presents a challenge to your ego, when all goes well and also when it doesn't. It may be helpful to devise a career plan to keep you on track, but be sure to schedule time for yourself and those who support you.

Preparing Your Dossier or Application Materials

If you are in a discipline such as biology, which requires a research interests statement or short research proposal as part of the application, it should be formulated over the summer. Those in engineering fields, should have a clear idea of a research program to discuss in interviews. You should know the costs of equipment involved in your proposed research and possible funding sources (here your advisor can be helpful).

If you are in a field, such as English, in which a writing sample may be required before a decision is made to interview you at the December national meeting, you should be writing as much as possible on your dissertation over the summer. Then, you should have your dissertation advisor and readers critique what you have written. You will need to put together a draft of your curriculum vitae and have it reviewed by your advisor, the department placement advisor, or by a counselor at the CDC.

Getting References

No matter what your field, you will need at least three strong letters of recommendation from faculty who know you well. In humanities disciplines, a student will have taken classes from, taught for, or be acquainted with a number of faculty members. These scholars will be likely to write a letter (or perhaps two versions of a letter) for you. You may want to apply to more than one type of institution, for example, to a liberal arts college, where teaching and community involvement are paramount, and to a public university where a balanced picture of scholarship and teaching will be most valued.

In science and engineering disciplines, it is likely that a candidate will have worked with one faculty member since the third year of his or her program, two if s/he has had a post-doctoral

position. But this candidate may have also collaborated with a faculty member or a scientist at another school or research lab, or may have had industry experience prior to the Ph.D. It should be possible to have several referees who will write individual letters and/or make phone calls on your behalf or mention you when queried about good candidates for an open position. Recommendations, then, are not entirely limited to academic referees.

Ensuring the Best Possible Recommendation Letters

It is crucial to make arrangements to get the best oral and written recommendations possible. You should talk with each person who will be recommending you, telling them about the types of jobs you are seeking. Provide them with copies of your CV-in-progress, copies of papers you wrote for their classes, copies of student evaluations from classes you taught for them, or anything else they may need to write (or speak) lengthy, detailed, laudatory endorsements of your outstanding intellect, scholarly promise and charming personality. This is not intended to be facetious -- you need recommendations that will stand above the average formulaic letters.

The importance of this cannot be overemphasized. You have the opportunity to affect what is said about you and to affect what may be a potential colleague's first impression of you. It may truly mean the difference between many interviews or none. There have been several instances in recent years in which first- or second-time candidates have failed to be offered interviews. Upon examining their files, it has been found that letters of recommendation are dated, perfunctory, poorly written or they inaccurately reflect the candidate's aspirations. When changes have been made, these same people have been successful in obtaining interviews.

Should anyone show the slightest reluctance to write a letter, it is best to approach the matter directly. You might ask, "Do you have any reservations about writing a positive letter on my behalf?" If you still feel unsure of the quality of the letter that is written, ask an advisor, other trusted faculty member, faculty placement officer in your department, or graduate counselor at the CDC to read your file. Most likely some remedy is possible.

It is important to have completed enough of your dissertation, or to be far enough along in your research that your letter writers can speak with assurance about your present work and future promise. If you have letters written earlier, perhaps when you applied for dissertation or fieldwork funding, you must have them updated to show that you are farther along, and that you are unlikely to remain "ABD", instead of Ph.D.

Setting up a Reference File and Applying to Jobs - Using the CDC

You may put together a dossier of your CV, your letters of recommendation, and perhaps a list of courses taken at the graduate level to show your breadth. Your department may maintain these files and help you mail them out. If this is not the case, you may use the services of the CDC to mail your CV and letters of recommendation. (Other documents mentioned below you will send yourself, if they are requested.) The value of using the CDC service is to have a repository of all your reference letters over time. You may specify which letters are to be sent for each application, and your file can be maintained indefinitely, if it is activated at least every ten years. For information about these services, call or come by the Records desk (723-1548) or go to: cardinalcareers.stanford.edu/reference

Your Application - What the Search Committee Sees First

You will need to respond to job announcements or openings you learn about by sending an individualized letter of application (cover letter) and a CV to a faculty member, a department chair or to a search committee. Research statements and teaching statements (or teaching portfolios) are often required as well. Sometimes other documents, such as a transcript, a dissertation abstract, or (very rarely) a writing sample, are requested with the application. It is useful to include a self-addressed, stamped postcard with the application, which will let you know that your application has been received, since most educational institutions don't acknowledge receipt of applications. As Darley and Zanna explain in *The Complete Academic*:

The academic hiring system is not a model of efficiency. The people making the hiring decisions are faculty members who have backed into taking that responsibility. They are overloaded, they are not professionals at hiring, and they tend not to be completely organized. .. The communications you do receive may be somewhat unclear or even, if coming from several sources, apparently contradictory ... Obviously, the high ambiguity of the hiring situation will make you anxious and/or depressed ... Expect all this; it is easier if you are prepared for it.

The next step may be to request that your file is sent by the CDC or by your department, or you may ask your advisor and your other referees to send individual letters. Some announcements request that you send only your letter and CV until they contact you. Others, as mentioned above, want a lot of information about each candidate with the initial application.

Deciding How Widely to Cast Your Net

Your area of research may overlap several fields, or your scholarly background may be broad enough to allow you to apply to many academic jobs. If the job market is particularly good, you may be tempted to apply widely. One foreign language student found that there were 500 positions to which she could apply! Some words of caution here: assembling a proper application is time-consuming, as is keeping track of applications, responding to requests for writing samples, transcripts or other documentation. Don't apply to positions at schools in geographical locations you would never consider living. If invited for a campus visit you will be wasting your time and theirs. The other side of this argument is that you may have always thought you would never consider living in a remote region of a certain place, but after a visit, you find it charming and the people delightful. It is important to assess which job values and characteristics are important to you in a job before applying.

Preparing For Screening and Campus Interviews

Some departments have organized placement support for their job-seeking graduate students. This may consist of group meetings in which students receive information about writing CVs and letters of application, information about setting up reference files at the CDC or directions about setting up departmental reference files. There may be a discussion of financial assistance the department will provide, about how to get the most from a conference or annual meeting and how to prepare for interviews at these meetings or at campuses. Some lucky students will have the opportunity, prior to the meetings, to have a mock interview with faculty acting as interviewers. Though this sounds grueling, it is by far the best way to become prepared and confident for the real interviews to come.

Attending CDC Seminars about the Job Search

If none of this assistance is available to you, make use of the Fall and Winter programs organized by the CDC, in cooperation with other Schools and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). In these, Stanford faculty and successful candidates discuss the academic job search process and answer questions.

A bibliography of books and pamphlets that describe the academic job search processes for different fields appears at the end of this document. These are available to read at the CDC, may be available at the Stanford Bookstore and may be ordered from various professional associations.

If You Are an International Student

Part of your necessary preparation as an international student will be to understand the implications of your visa status and any restrictions it may cause. If you have a residency requirement to return to your home country upon completion of your studies, will you be likely to

get a waiver from your home country, or is your training critically needed at home? Will Stanford or a funding agency that supports research in which you are involved write letters on behalf of your continued stay?

You need to be familiar with the requirements for an institution to seek an H-1 visa for a limited-term appointment, and for an academic employer to seek permanent residency for a prospective employee, in the case of a tenure-track appointment. They need to be able to obtain letters of support from your advisors and others, showing you to be of "distinguished merit and ability" in order to document a limited-term appointment.

To obtain permanent residency status, it must be shown that you are the "best person" in the field for the appointment that has been made. This requires some review of your application materials and some additional letter writing on your behalf, but personnel in most large institutions (and many smaller ones) are familiar with the procedures and the additional documentation is not an impediment to employment. It is important for you to know how they feel about the procedures and what status they feel is appropriate to the position to which you are applying.

Screening Interviews at Conferences and Meetings

It is economical for departments to see a number of candidates with promising applications (and those who have paid their way to the meeting) in a period of three or four days. These meetings also serve as the vehicles for those in the field to communicate new research and theory, as networking opportunities and as the base of operations for exploring the host city. Little wonder that some interviewees have come back from these experiences with stories of faculty bustling in late to interviews, or of other interviewers seeming distracted or nodding off as the candidate describes his or her dissertation. Other students have had uniformly pleasant experiences.

How Are Candidates Evaluated in an Interview?

Candidates are evaluated on a myriad of qualifications depending on the department, area of study, and type of school. In general, however, the following attributes are assessed during screening and academic interviews:

- Subject area knowledge
- Communication skills
- Personal attributes (leadership, engaging, personality, appropriate attire, etc.)
- Teaching competence
- Research competence
- Research relevance to the field, department, and/or school
- Enthusiasm for and interest in the position and fit for the department/school

The following sections will address questions and issues addressed during the interview that will help interviewers assess these skills. A more detailed question preparation list is on page 12.

Questions about Your Research

What are these brief interviews about? If you are invited, at least a few people on a search committee are impressed by your qualifications on paper. The interview is your chance to make the paper come alive.

You will be asked to talk about your dissertation. There may be one interviewer who is genuinely interested in your topic and who may ask you about your approach and conclusions, its contribution to the field and relationship to other research. If you have had a chance to practice informally or formally with faculty/peers, you will have no trouble giving a five-minute or shorter overview of your dissertation and what it does. This will be useful later at campus visits when you

will meet many potential co-workers who will want to know about your work, but who may not hear your "job talk."

Research the Interviewing Institution

Another useful preparation technique for these interviews is to look through the catalogs of each school with which you will interview. Reference copies of most school catalogs are available in Meyer Library and the Undergraduate Advising Center on the first floor of Sweet Hall. It is perfectly appropriate to ask the institution to send you copies of their catalogs, if there is time before the convention. As you search these catalogs, consider these issues:

- What type of institution and composition of student body will the interviewers represent?
- Who are the faculty in the department you would join?
- Do you know any of them? Does your advisor or other faculty know them?
- How many, and who from the department will interview you?
- What courses are taught?
- What seems to be the emphasis or orientation of the department?

Knowing the answers to these questions will help you plan for some of the questions you may be asked and to think of questions that you will want to ask them. You may want to know about interdisciplinary courses or special programs for undergraduates, or you may want to know students' views on current topics. Centers and institutes in which you could participate or opportunities for collaborative research or teaching may be of interest to you. * Remember, you are also interviewing them to assess fit!

Other Questions You May Be Asked

You will usually be asked about your teaching experience, what you are interested in teaching, and how you would teach an introductory or survey course in the field, including texts you might use. You may be asked about future research plans, particularly if your dissertation is completed, or nearly so. You may be asked to tell a bit about yourself. Treat this as an opportunity to talk about sub-fields in which you have interests, additional courses you could teach, or travel and study relevant to your professional interests. This is not a request for personal information.

Personal Questions

On a personal level, there may be some questions about marital status, children, and so forth, which may not be asked solely for the purpose of employment discrimination. With faculty shortages occurring, perhaps you have a significant other that is a budding business professor and who should be included in an offer to fly you back for an interview.

On the other hand, there may be some interviewers who may feel that a male candidate is unstable if not married, while a female is not a serious academic if she is. You can choose to ignore such questions, or assure them that your personal life does not interfere with your professional one. You may also reinterpret a question, so that answer can be professional and positive. For example: "Perhaps you are concerned about my ambitious research goals. Based on my productivity so far, and future plans, I see nothing to jeopardize my work."

You may decide, too, that you would not want to work with the interviewing faculty because they asked inappropriate questions, and report your experience to faculty from your home department. Hopefully some of the enlightened among them will take your interviewers to task. Even unpleasant experiences such as these provide an opportunity to think on your feet, assert yourself, and practice dealing with faculty members as colleagues, equals to whom you have something valuable to offer.

Practical Matters for Interviewing

Some practical matters for screening interviews: do not schedule them too close together. If you are having a good interview, it could go on for more than 45 minutes, while the committee in

another hotel waits to see you and decides that you are not reliable. If you must check in with the placement center in order to find out about scheduled interviews, do so before the first day of interviews. Have the names under which a department's room is registered, so you can attempt to rearrange your schedule if it seems unrealistic. Because interviews may occur in several locations in a city, be sure you know how to get from one hotel to another and know the schedules of public transportation, if necessary.

Don't wear clothes that you have never worn before -- they may be uncomfortable and can distract you from the business at hand. Do dress as you see faculty dress when they are welcoming dignitaries to your home department. Slacks and a sport coat, a tailored dress or skirt and jacket are usually appropriate for daytime wear. A bag (to accommodate both extra copies of your CV and a rugged pair of shoes for sprinting to the next interview) may be an item to take along for daytime use.

Be sure to ask for the phone number of your contact person for each interview, and find out what materials you should bring along to the interview. In addition to your CV it may be helpful to have copies of your dissertation abstract or a statement of research plans, copies of reprints, syllabi of courses you have taught, and other documents that add credence to your candidacy.

After the Interview ... Thank Them and Wait

After the interviews, you may have a relatively short or long wait. In past years candidates were typically invited to campuses by the month of February, but in recent years, a few people have been invited before conferences have ended to come to campuses within the following two weeks. Do write thank you notes to each person on the committees who interviewed you, if possible, or at least to your contact person. This means you must get their names correctly at the interview. Should you fail to hear from departments with whom you felt interviews went well, you or your advisor can inquire about the status of the search, and your advisor can lobby a bit for your candidacy.

The Campus Interview or "Fly Back"

You may be invited to an interview on a campus at almost any time during the fall through the spring; possibly right after a convention where you have given a paper, after a screening interview, or after you have submitted the required written documents and have been contacted by telephone by the chair of a search committee or department chair. Many institutions are now giving invitations to "fly-backs" at December conferences, right after screening interviews.

These interviews give you the chance to learn as much as you can about the people and place where you may spend several or many precious years. It is wise to develop a list of questions to ask at the time you are invited to a campus interview.

Practicing Your "Job Talk"

If you have had the opportunity to give a paper at a conference, large or small, you have done a good part of the preparation for this longer interview process.

If you have not had this chance, you may want to organize some informal talk/critique sessions with other students in your department or lab, and propose that faculty members sit in to give advice. You will get very valuable suggestions from the Academic Job Search Series, at which the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), Michele Marincovich, presents a program on planning and giving a "job talk." At the interview, you may be asked to teach a class or lead a seminar (or both) in addition to giving your talk. This is a sure sign that the institution counts good teaching as one of the tenure decision factors.

Several successful job seekers report that some schools request that candidates discuss "any topic other than their dissertation or research area." Sometimes the audience will be a mixture of

undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty. Other times you may give a research seminar for faculty and advanced graduate students. While you cannot prepare for every situation, knowing your material well will allow you to adjust when you must prepare for a different audience. It also will allow you to put your research aside and not forget key points when you must channel significant energy into preparing another class or topic.

Questions about the Job Talk and About Teaching Classes

Most importantly, you will want to know about the setting for your talk:

- Who is the audience and how many?
- What is the general make-up of the audience? Will it be the general student body, administrators and faculty? Or, just the faculty and graduate students from the department?
- What is the total time allotted?
- How much time is usually given at the end for questions and answers?
- What are the physical arrangements - an auditorium, a lounge or a classroom?
- Can the location be changed if the arrangements sound terrible?
- What time of day will your talk be scheduled?
- Will you have some time just before to collect your thoughts?
- Can the department reproduce handouts from originals you will send or must you bring along your own?

You should know your audiovisual needs for the talk and be able to ask for them so that arrangements can be made well in advance, or know what substitutes can be made to accommodate these.

If you are asked to teach a class (or more than one!):

- What levels are the students?
- What texts are being used?
- What are the sizes of the classes?

It's useful to go to talks given by candidates for positions in your home department to observe how, or how not to give a talk.

If you are asked to teach a class and it does not go well, you will be able to salvage your reputation as a good teacher if you have had the foresight to have videotaped an earlier class session that you've taught. The Center for Teaching and Learning provides this as a service to assist in improving teaching techniques of TAs and faculty. You may want to inquire about this at the CTL (723-1326). The Technical Communications Program in the School of Engineering (723-2573) also will videotape your talk and give you feedback.

Overall Preparation for the Interview

You will meet most of the faculty in the department singly or in small groups, as well as the dean of the school and personnel representatives. Interviews may be one, two or even three days long, and should be approached with good preparation. Much of what has been said in the screening interview section about researching the department's orientation, the faculty interests and publications, the institution's philosophy and "culture" applies even more strongly here. You can easily search through relevant databases for publications by faculty members, or learn more about them in *Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities*, *The Yearbook of Higher Education* or in professional association membership directories. Reference librarians in Green Library or in other special libraries can help with searches. Faculty in your department may know individuals on other faculties or know their work.

This information will help you know if there are certain faculty you should meet because your work is similar and provides the possibility of collaboration (or of competition). Familiarity with

others' work will give the impression that you care enough about the interview to have made the effort to learn about the institution.

Meeting People, Making Observations

General requests you should make include having a schedule sent to you ahead of time, as well as a current catalog and a faculty handbook. As you review this information, try to answer the following:

- Can you find faculty with whom you can collaborate on research?
- What is the relationship of their work to yours?
- What is the main theoretical or philosophical orientation of the department?
- What could you add?
- Does the department seem to be split or fragmented?

You can request to meet with junior faculty, graduate and/or undergraduate students, as well as with any faculty in other departments that interest you. They will give you their perspective on schisms, internal power struggles, and informal networks you should know about. How content or frustrated, bright or boring do these "lower in the food chain" groups seem? (That's how you'll feel, too.) Junior faculty may also help you understand what types of non-salary items may be negotiable, should you receive an offer, and they will know something about the stability and growth or attrition of the department. Other factors to consider:

- Are there LGBT, women, or ethnic minority faculty and staff with whom you can talk?
- Would you be willing to live in a place where there are no members of your race, sexual preference, religion or culture?
- What do you think about an institution where there are no tenured members of your sex, sexual preference, or ethnicity?
- If you have children, what will the schools, neighborhoods be like for them? What are the employment opportunities for your spouse at the university or in the community?
- Will you have time to drive around or be driven around the community? Not only will you want to determine if there are colleagues with whom to teach and do research, you'll want to know about the quality of life for you in the academic and surrounding communities.

Travel Arrangements and Survival Tips

More general questions you should ask about the visit include travel arrangements:

- Should you make and pay for your own?
- Will you be met at the airport, or how should you get to the hotel or campus?
- What documents will they need to reimburse you?

Assume that every institution will pay for your travel, and take documents along with you to leave with the department chair, secretary or personnel representative.

If you are offered a visit to one institution in the same travel area as one from whom you haven't heard, it is appropriate to call the second school and tell them you will be in the area on an interview. This may help them decide that they do want to interview you. It is probably no more grueling for you than two separate round trips. Do remember to carry on a change of clothes and any slides or presentation materials you will need -- sometimes your luggage has an itinerary different from your own. Do take along a copy of your dissertation, if finished. While no one may ask for it, if you say you are finished, it is good to be able to back up the statement and refer to it as needed.

Because interviews will be non-stop, continuing in some fashion through meals and social events, practical survival tips are in order:

- Try to arrive early enough the day before your interview so that you can rest. Job seekers have pointed out that the last leg of travel to some campuses may be by small plane. Beware of airsickness, and give yourself time to recover!
- Try to disengage yourself early enough in the evenings, so you will be rested for morning meetings.
- You, as the interviewee, will be responding to questions and asking them continually, while interviewers take turns eating and talking with you. Take along some portable high-energy food, which you can munch quickly, perhaps before your talk, or before the obligatory cocktail hour, to keep your blood sugar level up.
- Do not overindulge -- you are the center of attention, after all, and your social behavior is being observed as part of your professionalism.

Learning about the Department and the Job

During your visit you will spend time with the department chair. This is the time to discuss not only your scholarship, but also the important items that will allow your scholarship to continue productively.

- You will want to learn about the research facilities, office space, the availability of equipment you will need (or the possibility of a budget to buy what you need).
- You will want to know if equipment, offices, computer facilities or time must be shared, with whom and how much.
- What start-up funds are available for the first year to get your research started, and what support services exist, such as from the office of research?
- Can you hire research assistants to help get some preliminary results to help your proposals' success?
- What are the expectations for obtaining outside funding?
- Will there be an adequate acquisitions budget to augment library holdings in your area of specialization, if needed?
- Is secretarial support or your own PC offered?
- Does the department pay for photocopying, office supplies, memberships to professional organizations, subscriptions, conference attendance, and travel costs?
- Can you teach in the summer to supplement your academic year salary?
- Will you have a reduced load in the first year to finish your dissertation or get research started?
- What is a typical teaching load and what are class sizes?
- Are graduate student teaching or research assistants available to help with teaching and labs?
- Will you be able to supervise graduate students?
- Are new faculty required to teach certain courses?
- Will you be able to offer a new course?
- What are the expectations of new faculty regarding committee service?
- Does the department assign a tenured "mentor" to advise new faculty about what is important and necessary to attend to in the first years?
- What are the policies on consulting outside the institution -- are there limits on number of days or earnings?

The dean of the school or division and perhaps a personnel officer will meet with you during your stay, sometimes in concert with the department chair. If you have not been able to find out otherwise, you may ask here about the promotion and tenure rates in the department and at the institution:

- How often are junior faculty reviewed and when do they come up for tenure?
- How much emphasis is put on research, teaching and academic service when making reappointment and tenure decisions?

- You should, of course, know much earlier whether or not you are interviewing for a tenure-track position, the length of the contract, and whether it is renewable.

The dean will be the person to whom you can direct questions about institution-wide issues, such as governance:

- Who sits on various committees and how are policies set?
- How are relations between faculty and administrators?
- How is the institution perceived in the community?
- Are there trends in enrollments -- up, down, toward younger, older populations, balance of gender, mix of ethnicity?
- Are new programs anticipated to address the needs of a particular student population or to attract a potential student population?

Questions about Salary/ Benefits

During this process you may be asked about your salary requirements, or you may be told the starting figure for the position. Before you go to the campus, it is wise to research salaries through a source, such as the American Society of Engineering Education, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, or the Annual Salary Survey of the American Association of University Professors (in the March-April edition of *Academe*, available at the CDC). This is not the time to discuss your requirements, but to be aware of appropriate ranges for the type of institution, the discipline and the geographic location. Listen and plan ahead for the offering phone call. It may also be helpful to meet with a counselor at the CDC to review salary negotiation strategies.

Potential Questions for the Academic Interview

Research Competence/Relevance

- Why did you choose this dissertation topic?
- What are your research goals for the next five years? Ten?
- What facilities and equipment will your research require?
- What theoretical framework is your dissertation (or other research) based upon?
- Have you made plans to acquire external funding for your research?
- In what way does your dissertation research contribute to the field? To this department?
- What is the most significant piece of research you have read this year?
- If you could start your dissertation over again, what changes would you make?

Teaching Competence

- What is your teaching pedagogy?
- If you could create and teach any course, what would it be?
- Give specific examples of ways in which you motivate both a classroom and an individual.
- How do you feel about teaching required classes?
- What do you feel is an ideal caseload? Class size?
- What would you include in X course?

Professional Goals

- What factors determined your decision to go into academia?
- Why did you select to apply to our university?
- Refresh our memory: tell us about your professional growth.

Personal Attributes

- What qualities do you bring to our faculty? How did you develop these?
- What have you learned from your research? Travels? Graduate experience? Etc.
- How would you describe your doctoral program?

Other

- Why did you take so long to complete your graduate work?
- I see you have limited publications. Why? What are your future publication plans?
- What is your required salary range?
- How would you feel about living in this area?

After the Campus Interview

After the interview, write thank-you notes to the department chair and to committee members, deans and others with whom you spent significant time. You may inquire before you leave when decisions will be made. Send any materials you promised to faculty along with thank-you notes. Don't forget to send receipts for reimbursement.

Now there will be a period of waiting. If your interview has been early and informal, or organized out of convenience when you were in the area for a meeting or conference, you may not hear formally for months. If you went for an interview in March, April or May, hiring decisions may be closer at hand. If you must wait, seize the time as golden to work on your research and dissertation, or to move ahead on that article you need to submit. You can begin to put syllabi together for classes you will teach, and you may want to take some time out for yourself, family, and friends.

Should you receive an offer, but have heard nothing yet from the place you most hope to get an offer, it is acceptable to ask the first institution for time to decide. Then you will call the department chair at the second (or at several other) institutions to ask about their progress in the selection process. They may ask you where you have received an offer or even how much you have been offered. You must be forthright. They may discuss candidates and offers directly with chairs at other schools, and hopefully, this will be to your advantage. Most chairs will tell you something about your status in order to help you make a decision. Some candidates have had the experience of schools bidding against each other, with the effect that the candidates started jobs at significantly higher salaries than their initial offers.

Job Offers and Negotiations

Offers initially will come by telephone, while rejections arrive by mail. No response may mean you are second choice, but the first choice has not yet accepted or declined. You are not obligated to give an answer in any standard time frame. You may certainly try to negotiate for as much time as you need. The department has worked very hard to come to agreement to make you an offer. You seem by far the best person at this point. The committee does not want to have to accept second choice, but would like to have the search concluded and inform the other candidates. You must decide if this is the offer you want, and you may need some time.

Making a Second Campus Visit

You may need to make a second visit with your family to see if they will adapt to the area, and/or to clarify points about the offer with the department chair. The institution may or may not pay for this visit. It's not encouraging if they don't, but some will pay only if you accept the offer. You will want to talk, with specific reference to your offer, about all the points (mentioned earlier) which you explored in the first visit. You will also want to find out about:

- university-subsidized housing

- reimbursement or supplement for moving expenses
- schools or child care for the children
- employment for your significant other

University personnel officers can answer some of these questions. At public institutions, where salary levels are more strictly based on measurable items, such as years of teaching or post-doc experience, it may not be possible to negotiate salaries or university-wide benefits (health benefits or housing, for example.) It may be possible to negotiate other items that will increase your income or chances for tenure, such as:

- more lab space, equipment
- library acquisitions
- a personal computer
- teaching assistants for classes
- summer teaching opportunities

Visiting a second time helps you see what needs to be ordered, processed, or set up before you arrive. In private institutions, salary offers initially may be lower, but there is more room for negotiation. These institutions may be more helpful in having other needs met, such as:

- library acquisitions
- housing
- jobs for significant others or assistance in finding jobs

There may be more expectation that you'll participate in university life outside the classroom as a "good citizen." One last word on salaries: the higher the starting salary, the larger the increases in annual raises or promotions.

The Offer Letter or Letter of Agreement

You should expect to receive an offer letter after you have accepted verbally. It will state the type of appointment (tenure-track or temporary, nine- or more months per year, length of appointment and appointment level). It should have, in writing, all the terms you have discussed, and tell you how often you will be reviewed. If it is tenure-track, it should specify in which year the tenure review would take place. If all is not there, you should call the department chair and have a new letter issued. Then sign that letter, retain a copy and return the original. If they have said they will help your significant other find a job, have specific types of help written in your contract, or don't accept the offer until your significant other, too, has an offer.

A few institutions may have such informal policies that a letter of agreement or contract is not issued routinely. In this case, you should write up a detailed letter of agreement, sign it, keep a copy, and send it to the department chair, asking him/her to countersign and return a copy to you.

Do not consider yourself hired, or turn down other offers, until a written document has been signed by you and by the cognizant person at the institution! This may sound calculating, but the advice comes from others' sad experiences. Once you have signed and returned the documents you no longer have any bargaining power with the institution and oral assurances or promises may be forgotten.

Going to Plan B

What if you didn't get an offer or an offer you are willing to take? First, do not assume it has anything to do with you personally, but with the range or limitations of jobs available that year. Remember that next year the job market will change and you will be a different candidate. You

will have finished your dissertation, or published more articles, or have your dissertation revised and accepted for publication. You may have a year or more of post-doc experience.

The second consideration is to find out if your lack of an offer did have anything to do with you. If you feel comfortable, ask the university or department contact person for feedback. Or, ask your advisor to seek out feedback about you from colleagues who interviewed you or heard your talk. There are many things one easily can learn to do to be more effective as a speaker, teacher or interviewee, if you are otherwise a good candidate.

Third, present to your advisor your need for another year of financial support. She or he may be able to keep you on, you may be able to find a good post-doc, or the department may be able to have you teach classes as a fellow. There are part-time teaching opportunities in local colleges and universities, too. This leaves time for research, writing and for revising for publication.

It may be a discouraging prospect to continue to look for an academic job. You may feel that you should be getting one of the jobs, or that you should be looking at non-academic options because others are doing so. Only you are the expert on your own interests, skills and goals, and if you feel committed to the academic life, keep up your spirits and your work!

A number of Stanford Ph.D.s have reported in to the CDC, successful after several years of searching and part-time teaching or post-doctoral work, and have uniformly said, "Tell them to keep trying; it's worth it!"

CDC Academic Job Search Resources

Book Resources

A Ph.D. Is Not Enough: A Guide to Survival in Science
Academe, Bulletin American Association of University Professors
Academic Job Search Handbook
Art and Politics of College Teaching
AWP Job List
CA. Public and Private Colleges/ Univ. Directory of Articulation & Transfer Personnel
Campus Use of the Teaching Portfolio
Career Opportunities in Education
Career Services Connection
Careers in Education
Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career
Chronicle of Higher Education
Community College Week
Cracking the Academia Nut
Curriculum Vitae Handbook
CV and Cover Letter Binder
How to Prepare Your Curriculum Vitae
JOB Bank: Registry of Community Colleges
Job Search in Academe
Mentor in a Manual
MLA Guide to the Job Search
Ms. Mentor's Impeccable Advice for Women in Academia
On the Market: surviving the academic job search
Peterson's Four Year Colleges 2002
PhD Pathways: Exploring Career Options
Research Centers Directory, 2001, 27th ed. Volumes I and II
Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching
To Boldly Go - A Practical Career Guide for Scientists

Tomorrow's Professor: Preparing for academic careers in science and engineering
Women in Higher Education
Women in Science
Women's Guide to Navigating the PH.D. in Engineering and Science

CDC Guides

CVs, Cover Letters, and Teaching Portfolios
Internet Resources
Community College Careers

Stanford University Career Development Center

(650) 723-3963

cardinalcareers.stanford.edu