Academic careers week: Searching and applying for jobs

Upcoming:
Negotiating an academic job offer
(Wednesday, 1 - 2 p.m., DML 240)

Balancing academic careers and family
(Friday, 12 - 1:30 p.m., HNB auditorium)
What’s happening today?

9 - 10: Presentation and panel Q&A
10 - 11: Mock interviews (small groups)
11 - 12: Mock job talks (small groups)
What are your top two questions about the academic job search?
Some learning goals

Understand the chronology of a job search
Find out where to find out about jobs
Reflect on where to apply
Be familiar with the components of an application portfolio
Learn where to get more help/information

Other goals:
To spark your brain, to formulate questions
To wake up, to participate
Before we begin

Chad’s #1 rule about the job hunt:

GET FEEDBACK FROM OTHERS!

Research advisor
Dissertation committee members
Other faculty
Postdocs
Graduate student peers at USC
Graduate student peers elsewhere
Friends
Family
etc.
Before we begin

Chad’s #2 rule about the job hunt:

Start early. Pace yourself!
Steps in the job search

- Schools advertise jobs
  - You apply
  - You have an initial interview (phone or conference)
  - You have a campus interview
  - You receive an offer
  - You negotiate
  - You accept
Where to find out about jobs?

- Professional organization website (APA, AMS, MLA, etc.)
- Departmental websites
- Chronicle of Higher Education (jobs.chronicle.com)
- Conferences
- Publications
- Word of mouth
Stop and reflect

Career goals?
Strengths/weaknesses?
Personal/family goals?
Type of institution?

Tradeoff:
Applying takes resources...
...but you can’t get hired if you don’t apply
Possible components of an application package

Cover letter
Curriculum vitae
Research statement
Publications (list or reprints)
Teaching philosophy statement
“Evidence of teaching ability”
Letters of recommendation
“First principles” for job application materials

Understand who will read your materials
A committee of people in your discipline *but not experts in your research*…
and possibly, people from other disciplines

Understand how your materials get read
Probably in a cursory manner
because the aforementioned people are busy

The bottom line
Don’t be shallow or simple,
but still “make it easy” on the readers
Cover letter encapsulates your application (1 - 2 pages)

¶ Contextualize yourself:
Name, position applying for, how you learned of it, degree/field/current position

¶ Research:
General area, methodologies, why interesting/impt., anything “sexy” (grants, awards, etc.)

¶ Teaching: Quick rundown of experience, ideas, anything “sexy” (awards, innovations, etc.)

¶ Close: Mention what’s included in your app, express enthusiasm

Order and relative weight depends on type of institution. Tailor to the institution!
CV summarizes all relevant experience and accomplishments.

**Potential items to include:**
- Degrees, dates (include dissertation/thesis titles)
- History of professional experience (lab tech, postdocs, etc.)
- Grants, honors, scholarships, awards
- Publications
- Presentations
- Teaching experience
- Professional service (refereeing, organizing, etc.)
- University/departmental service (organizing, committees, etc.)
- Membership in professional organizations

Be relevant, organized, complete and succinct.

Ordering of items may depend on target institution.
§1 Contextualize your research (briefly):
What “kind” of linguist/philosopher/physicist are you?
In brief, what have you worked on,
and what big questions does that work address?
Why is your research important?
Show that you have a broad view of the field.
Withhold details. Aim at a “general” scholar in your discipline.
§2 Give some details of past/ongoing work:
What did you study, how does it fill a void?
What methods did you use? What were your main conclusions?
Show that you can do expert, scholarly work.
Figures can be very helpful if important and appropriate.
Include references.
§3 Outline the future of your program:
How will you expand on your past work?
What are your research plans for the immediate future?
What are your plans for the next few years?
What new areas will you branch into?
Schools want to know that you will keep being productive.
Teaching (philosophy) statement

May include reports and/or reflections on:
- Educational goals
- Style of teaching / classroom innovations
- Assessment methods
- Motivating students
- Use of technology
- Teaching development goals
- Courses in your present and future teaching repertoire
Evidence of teaching ability

May include:
Sample syllabi
Sample lecture notes
Sample assignments
Teaching awards
Course evaluations

(Suggestion: one page per course with numerical results at top, selected comments at bottom, and the statement “complete evaluations available upon request”)

Chad Topaz, Center for Excellence in Teaching
Letters of recommendation

**Tips:**
Choose recommenders who know you well
Choose recommenders who have clout
Request letters early
Offer CV and other materials to recommenders
Develop a letter-mailing plan that is convenient for your recommender
Send periodic, diplomatic reminders
Now that we’re done

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The academic job search handbook (Heiberger & Vick)

CET career resources: http://www.usc.edu/cet/careers

Chronicle of Higher Education: http://jobs.chronicle.com
(job listings, columns and forums)

Your advisor, colleagues, peers, friends, and family