

Looking for an Academic Job: General Advice and Outline

A. Finding job ads

This varies entirely by field: some professional organizations list ads (the MLA), some have crowdsourced spreadsheets (ecology). Figure out where jobs are listed in your discipline by asking faculty/other grad students. Some big clearinghouses:

- a. Academicjobsonline.org
- b. Higheredjobs.com
- c. Academicjobs.wikia.org

B. Timeline

- a. Most tenure track **academic jobs** hires are roughly timed to the academic year. Ads go up in the early fall, interviews happen throughout the fall, campus visits are in January/Feb, and offers are made in the spring. However, some jobs don't follow this timeline—particularly more teaching-focused jobs at smaller schools. These often post ads later in the year, well into the spring.
- b. **Postdocs** tend to have weird idiosyncratic requirements and deadlines (some have interviews, some don't). But generally they tend to follow the academic year, with deadlines in the fall.
- c. Most **visiting professor positions / lectureships** tend to get listed late, in the spring.
- d. If you are planning to apply for academic jobs, it is a good idea to have your materials ready by **late August** so that you can send them to your recommenders.

C. Process

- a. application
- b. request for more materials (sometimes)
  - i. materials: CV, cover letter, recommendation letters plus sometimes separate documents about research and teaching.
- c. interviews (usually 20-30 min; in person at national conferences or, increasingly, on Skype)
- d. campus visits

D. General advice

- a. Before you start applying for academic jobs, sit down and have a serious conversation with yourself about your limits. How long are you willing to look for an academic job? What limits do you have on the kind of job you want?
- b. Remember that your PhD is an extremely valuable thing *separate and apart* from whether it leads to a faculty position.
- c. Manage your expectations / try to emotionally disinvest and not take it personally. I applied for jobs for three years—probably around 200 applications total—and got rejected from 199 of those jobs! Rejection is the norm.
- d. Ask faculty to look at your materials and give you feedback. Two kinds of faculty you should ask, in particular: dissertation directors whose graduate students have gotten jobs and young faculty who have recently been on the market.
- e. Use Interfolio! It is a dossier service that stores your recommenders' letters, which means you only have to ask for one letter instead of having to constantly bug faculty and feel terrible.