

HITTING THE JOB MARKET

PREPARING FOR THE HUNT

When should you think about your job search and start preparing for it? As soon as possible! When you begin your graduate studies with an academic career in mind, you have to start building your dossier. This entails taking various steps such as:

- **Diversification:** Aim to broaden your knowledge of other fields beside your area of research when selecting graduate courses.
- **Orientation within a Field/Networking:** Once you have chosen your field of research, you should become familiar with the “who, what, where and when” of that field.
 - Find out who works in that field, in what journals they publish, what conferences they attend and when these events’ call for papers are published as well as when the events themselves take place. Look on the web for philosophy blogs and associations’ web pages that contain such information.
 - Join professional associations such as the APA (American Philosophical Association: <http://www.apaonline.org>), the CPA (Canadian Philosophical Association: <http://www.acpcpa.ca>) and any other specialized philosophical societies where you may disseminate your work and make professional contacts.
- **Publishing and Presenting:** Published articles and presented papers carry a lot of weight in a CV.
 - Getting an article published is a lengthy process. It is not uncommon to have to submit a piece to many journals before it gets accepted (do not submit to more than one journal at a time though). Consult with faculty members and advisors on course essays that have been deemed exceptional and ask for advice on how to revise them for publication.
 - Presenting papers and commentaries as part of scholarly conferences is also an excellent way to “put your name on the map”. Some associations provide graduate students travel stipends. Some departments also do. Look into those possibilities.
- **Acquiring Teaching Experience:** Teaching experience is gained by working as a marker/grader, teaching assistant and instructor. Having taught a few courses that have a high demand in many colleges and universities will definitely be an asset when looking for a job.
 - Again, aim for diversity in order to better fit departments that require their faculty to teach a wide range of courses.
 - Keep a record of all assignments as well as copies of teaching evaluations.
 - Look for any teaching awards or teaching assistantship awards your institution may offer and compete for them.
 - The teaching experience you acquire will help determine and refine your AOS and AOC
 - AOS: areas covered in your dissertation or in which you have a significant publication record. You should be capable of teaching a graduate course in your AOS.
 - AOC: areas covered by your teaching (as instructor, as TA, or as grader in cases of multiple assignments). You should be able to teach an upper-level undergraduate course in your AOC.
- **Departmental Service:** Participating in departmental activities is important. Try and get involved in conference organizations, departmental committees, graduate students unions, etc. so as to be able to show that you are not only an impressive scholar and teacher but also a good departmental citizen.

JOB HUNTING

When should you consider hitting the job market? This time: NOT as soon as possible. Ideally, you should go on the market only when your thesis is finished. You may, however, consider entering the market if your thesis is complete but not yet defended. It is not good strategy to enter the market if your thesis is not finished as the search for a position will eat up much of your time and you will have a harder time convincing a prospective employer that indeed you will have finished and defended successfully the thesis by the time of employment.

- **Job Postings and Timeline for Applications:** Most tenure-track jobs are posted early in the fall for employment the following academic year (most often starting July 1st). Postings are to be found
 - In ***Jobs for Philosophers***, an APA publication that is published in paper and electronically. You must be a member of the APA to receive the hard copy and have access to the web postings. The first issue of JFP in October and the following in November are the largest issues of the year and contain most postings for the year. Later issues tend to advertise limited term appointments (1 year, 9 months and replacement positions). Many listings announce that interviews will be held at the Eastern Division Meetings of the APA in December (the largest job fair in our field, consider attending it and using its placement services).
 - In ***The Chronicle of Higher Education***. It is a weekly publication with the current number available on-line to members only. Back issues are open to any visitor (<http://www.chronicle.com>)
 - In ***University Affairs*** and the ***CAUT Bulletin*** as well as (very) occasionally in the ***Globe and Mail***. You can get a free subscription to *University Affairs* at <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/subscribe/index.html>
 - In your email if you are a member of listservs that provide such information (many specialized associations do).
 - On departmental bulletin boards.
- **Applying for a Position:** You have to look for the right positions for you and prepare a dossier to send by the application deadline.
 - When screening job listings, look for exact AOS and AOC matches. However, since these will not necessarily proliferate, you may also apply on positions for which you have the AOS but not necessarily the AOC as well as on positions for which you have the AOS as an AOC and the AOC as an AOS. Read the wording carefully and avoid applying for positions at higher ranks (e.g. associate or full, you're not there yet!).
 - Once you have a list of positions for which you want to apply make notes of any special elements that will need to be added to your application package for individual positions. While all job postings will ask you to send a letter of application, CV, and letters of recommendation, not all will require a transcript, writing sample or teaching dossier.
 - If your institution does not provide you with a placement service, arrange with former professors, advisors and teaching mentors for letters of reference to be prepared on your behalf. Inform your referees of every step in your job search and provide them with exact information for all letters you will need from them. Referees should be able to talk to your work as researcher and as teacher (when possible). Letters of reference will have to be sent directly by your referees if you are not using a placement service.
- **The Application Package:** Individual postings will specify which elements they want to receive as part of your application. The following are standard requests:
 - **Letter of Application:** It is a good idea to have templates of letters ready. That said, it is important to tailor your letter for each job you apply for. You should address the following in your letter:
 - Statement as to which position you are applying for
 - Mention current doctoral status and employment status (or postdoctoral)
 - Sketch of your thesis and related research

- Indicate the range of your teaching qualifications
- Indicate that your dossier is sent by the placement service of your institution (if applicable) or indicate that letters from your referees will be sent to them directly (if you handle your own application package).

You can also use the letter to:

- Discuss issues that are not properly addressed in the application package
- Briefly discuss research projects other than your thesis that are not presented in the package (e.g. the institution is not asking for a research profile)
- Stress how you are especially qualified for the job beyond what is apparent in your CV.
- Explain how you may satisfy specific requirements of their job description
- For schools with special mission statements, you may want to use a paragraph to explain that.
- If you are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident and are applying for a job in Canada, make a mention of it.

Do not exceed one page.

- **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** There are many different types of layouts for CVs but the main categories should be covered in it. These are:
 - **Basic personal information:** These should be placed at the top of the CV and include your name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, phone number, email address and URL (if applicable).
 - **Information on your AOS and AOC:** List at most 2 AOS and about 5 or 6 AOC.
 - **Education:** List your degrees with dates and with the most recent first. Provide the title of your thesis as well as the name of your supervisor(s) and other members of your thesis committee. Stop the list at college level degrees. List competence in modern or ancient languages (read, written, spoken)
 - **Research activities:** List publications in the following order: books, chapters in books, articles, book reviews. Within each category, subdivide as “Accepted”, “Submitted” and “In Preparation”. Give titles for published, accepted and submitted work and provide a brief description for work that is in preparation. For talks, give the title, identify the venue and give dates.
 - **Teaching:** List your teaching assignments, giving most recent responsibilities first (courses).
 - **Fellowships and Prizes:** List such with the most recent first. Include research assistantships. If the competitiveness of a fellowship or prize is not obvious, add a brief description.
 - **Departmental and Professional Activities:** This is the place to indicate your participation in departmental life.
 - **Cognate Skills:** You may identify any skills that might be of interest to an academic employer.
 - **List of Referees:** This should include their Departmental affiliation with their postal and e-mail addresses and their business telephone numbers.

The following website gives you information on CVs as well as a list of resources:

- http://www.yorku.ca/careers/ma_phd/academic_writingcvs_resources.html

- **Letters of Recommendation:** Letters written on your behalf should be confidential. Your letters should thus be sent directly by the referees to the placement service you use or to the department where you are forwarding your application. You should aim to have 3 or 4 solid letters about your research and 1 or 2 about your teaching. You may supplement those letters with a few others that would complete the picture of you as an academic (e.g. a professor from another institution who knows your work). Most importantly: give time to your referees to write a letter for you.
- **Transcripts:** Only send them if requested. It is better to have an official copy sent directly to the search committee unless otherwise stated.
- **Dissertation Abstract:** The abstract should make your project clear, interesting and compelling, even to someone who is not a specialist in your area (as most members of hiring committees will be). Even if your thesis is not defended yet, treat it as a *fait accompli*. Do not give a chapter by

chapter summary. Rather, try to capture interest and intrigue your reader. You may want to conclude with some indication of the research areas to which it directly leads you OR to which it has lead you since you have finished it (if the thesis is a couple of years behind you).

- **Writing Sample:** The sample should be appropriate for the areas specified in the job description. If possible, include complementary samples that may display the diversity of your strengths. A conference paper is desirable, an offprint all the more so. If you decide to send a chapter of your thesis, revise it so that it becomes a stand-alone paper for which the reader does not need any knowledge of the arguments made in other chapters of the thesis.
- **Teaching Dossier:** The teaching dossier includes information on your teaching experience and puts emphasis on assignments where you have had a major responsibility. A teaching dossier may include a number of elements among which: a statement of teaching philosophy, summary of teaching evaluations, teaching journals, course outlines, description of assignments. The following websites provide good information on how to build a teaching dossier:
 - <http://web.uvic.ca/terc/resources/publications/teaching.htm>
 - <http://web.uvic.ca/terc/documents/pdf/TEACHING%20DOSSIER%20GUIDE.pdf>
 - <http://www.uregina.ca/tdc/PREPARING%20A%20TEACHING%20DOSSIER.htm>
 - <http://www.tag.ubc.ca/resources/teachingportfolios/dossiers/>
- **Research Profile (or Statement):** If your thesis defence is behind you by a full semester or more, you might want to add a document describing your research projects. You can include précis of articles, finished or in progress, large research projects, conference presentations. This will provide information to the hiring committee as to what direction you are taking as a researcher and how you see yourself as evolving academically.

PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW

Now that you have been short-listed for a position, you still have to interview successfully. Interviews for academic jobs entails an on-campus visit which may include: a job talk, a mock lecture, an interview with the dean, a meeting with a union representative, individual interviews with faculty members and/or a group interview with the hiring committee, and a meal with the hiring committee.

- Job talks and mock lectures are different things. While a job talk is research oriented and should relate to the AOS for which you are applying, a mock lecture is geared towards your teaching abilities. Some departments will ask you to do both. When asked to do a mock lecture, they might provide you with a course title and lecture topic. Students may attend. You may also be asked to deliver an actual lecture. You will have to prepare such upon request. You should, in contrast, have one or two job talks ready when you send applications.
- It may be useful to participate in training sessions with mock interviews at your institution. Be on the look-out for those.
- Plan a few courses, preparing possible course outlines and assignments. Have print-outs ready to show during interviews. This can prove useful when you discuss which courses you are ready to teach for the department.
- If you have not done so at the time of sending in your application (and you should have!), read about the faculty members in the department where you are interviewed. While interviewing, you can point to individual faculty members with whom you have research affinities. Also point to research groups to which you may be interested to contribute.
- Prepare a list of questions you want to ask of the members of the hiring committee, the dean and/or the union representative.

RESOURCES

More information can be gathered on the job search, interviewing, offer and first steps as appointee. The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences has an excellent document detailing best practices for new scholars: *The Academy as Community. A Manual of Best Practices for Meeting the Needs of New Scholars* (the document can be downloaded as a PDF at <http://www.fedcan.ca/english/publications/reports/>).

The York University Career Centre web page contains a wealth of information on all aspects of academic job search: http://www.yorku.ca/careers/ma_phd/

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