



**NYU | WAGNER**

ACADEMIC  
JOB SEARCH



# ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH GUIDE

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH TIMELINE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>WRITING YOUR CURRICULUM VITAE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ACADEMIC POSITION COVER LETTERS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>WRITING YOUR STATEMENT OF RESEARCH INTERESTS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>WRITING YOUR STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>NETWORKING AND THE ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>ON CAMPUS VISIT: TOURS, INTERVIEWS, AND SOCIALIZING</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>GIVING YOUR JOB TALK</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>NEGOTIATING AN ACADEMIC OFFER</b>	<b>22</b>

# INTRODUCTION

The following document is designed to help you understand and navigate the academic job search process. It provides a general overview of the job search timeline, components of the application packet, tips for on-campus job talks and interviews, and insights into the process of negotiating offers.

Throughout your job search you should reference supplementary academic job search sources including books and online guides. Additionally, attend all relevant Wagner Office of Career Services and NYU Office of Career Services events and workshops, as well as Wagner Doctoral Program events that can provide learning opportunities such as practice job talks and research presentations.

This resource guide was created through the contributions of Wagner faculty members Amy Ellen Schwartz, Beth Weitzman, and Ingrid Gould Ellen; student workers Jessica Thompson and Elizabeth Norman; and staff members Selmin Cicek, Purnima Taylor, Ruchel Ramos, and David Schachter. We hope you find this document to be a useful resource and wish you the best of luck in your academic job search.

# ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH TIMELINE

The academic job search can be a long and challenging process. The job search timeline can help you plan your approach and ensure that your activities are timed appropriately.

**June to August (1 year prior to job)** – Information collection and preparation of materials

- Gather reading (books, journals, etc.) and other resource materials (websites, guidelines) related to the academic job search (visit Wagner OCS for assistance)
- Create a schedule for finishing dissertation
- Discuss the job search process with faculty advisors
- Prepare CV and other written materials (i.e. statement of teaching philosophy; teaching materials including course descriptions, course evaluations, and syllabi; statement of research interests; 2-4 page dissertation abstract; writing sample)
- Begin to collect job announcements – subscribe to the Chronicle of Higher Education's e-mail service to monitor job advertisements, bookmark helpful websites (attain list from Wagner OCS), pick up position announcements at conferences and from professors and administrators in the department, and monitor association newsletters
- Create a spreadsheet to keep track of applications – include title, location, description, required materials, date due, date sent, etc.
- Plan for expenses including copying and postage, travel, clothes, etc.

**September to November** – Polish and send application materials

- Continue to search postings for job and post-doc opportunities
- Attend Wagner OCS job search workshops
- Finalize CV and other written materials, then make many copies of the documents that are not likely to change so that they can be sent quickly later
- Ask 3-5 faculty members to write letters of recommendation for you (provide them with your written materials and give them at least 2-3 weeks advance notice)
- Elicit feedback on all written materials from colleagues, faculty advisors, or other editors
- Create a website to display your materials
- Identify relevant positions, research the school/department via their websites and pertinent written materials
- Draft cover letters that are tailored to each position/school (print cover letters on school letterhead if possible)
- Send application materials (this stage should begin by the beginning of October)
- Follow-up on the status of faculty recommendations at least one week prior to application due date
- Continue making progress on your dissertation if it is not completed

- Select and register for Fall conferences (present at least one paper at a conference important in your field)
  - American Economics Association (AEA)
  - Association of Public Budgeting and Finance (ABFM)
  - American Public Health Association (APHA)
  - Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)
  - Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA)
  - Financial Management Association International (FMA)
  - National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA)
  - National Tax Association (NTA)
- Alert schools to which you have applied of your conference attendance
- Schedule and prepare for conference interviews
- Bring extra application packets to conferences
- Network with other current job applicants (exchanging information and comparing experiences can be very helpful)

**December to March** – Most interviews and job talks will occur during these months

- Continue attending conferences to interview and network
  - American Education Finance Association (AEFA)
  - American Evaluation Association (AEA)
  - American Planning Association (APA)
  - American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)
  - Urban Affairs Association (UAA)
- Write and send thank you notes after all interviews
- Contact schools from which you have not heard
- Work closely with faculty advisors willing to advocate for you
- Send letters to personal contacts that may have connections at schools to which you have applied. Have faculty advisors do the same.
- Begin preparation for campus interviews
- Prepare job talks and sign up for a practice run
- Prepare and practice a teaching lesson if applicable
- Continue to monitor listings and apply for all relevant positions

**April to August** – Accepting and negotiating an offer, or reevaluating your plans

- Continue campus interviews
- Assess fallback options
- Negotiate job offers
- Notify everyone involved with your search process once you have accepted an offer

# WRITING YOUR CURRICULUM VITAE

## INTRODUCTION

The Curriculum Vitae (CV) is the research world's equivalent of the resume. This document outlines in detail your educational history, teaching experience, publications, and other professional involvements and affiliations.

The CV is a clear, concrete factual list of experience and accomplishments separated by categories. Unlike a resume, a CV does not utilize action words and descriptive phrases to elaborate on the experiences and accomplishments listed.

## BASIC CV FORMAT

There is no standardized CV format. Create your own or follow someone else's format. basic outline might look something like this:

### **Name** **Contact Information**

### **Education**

- List degrees in reverse chronological order (most recent first) and specify an expected completion date for your Ph.D.
- Include dissertation topic, defense date, and dissertation advisor name.

### **Awards**

- Focus on graduate school.
- Include travel grants, tuition waivers, research and teaching assistantships, and outside grants or scholarships.

### **Professional Experience**

- List only positions relevant to your current work and goals.
- List organization, job title, and dates employed.
- A brief description of your accomplishments is acceptable if you wish to emphasize your professional experience.

### **Teaching Experience**

- Label dates on the left with semester and year information.
- List course titles, department, and responsibility title.
- If you wish to emphasize teaching, include further details about courses you taught.

### **Related Experience**

- List positions in research labs, internships, course grader positions and other related experience.

### **Research/Teaching Interests**

- List specific topics of research interest.
- List general topics of teaching interest.

**Publications**

- List publications for which you were the primary or second author in reverse chronological order (starting with the most recent article).
- Utilize a citation format that is appropriate to your field.
- Do not include 'in-progress' papers that have not yet been accepted for publication.
- Use the terms 'refereed and non-refereed' to distinguish between peer and non-peer reviewed publications.

**Conference Presentations**

- List conference presentations in reverse chronological order.
- Include presentation title, conference name, date and location.

**Professional Memberships/Affiliations****References**

- List the name, organization/affiliation, and phone number of each individual who has written a letter on your behalf. Make sure to ask permission to list this personal contact information for your references.

**ADDITIONAL POINTERS**

- Personal information is not included on your CV, however, some people do include family status for informational purposes.
- Omit a 'Curriculum Vitae' label at the top of the page.
- Omit personal information such as birthdate, birthplace, social security number, and citizenship information unless an institution has specifically asked for it.

# ACADEMIC POSITION COVER LETTERS

## PURPOSE

The cover letter is one of the most important pieces of your application for an academic job. It serves as your first introduction to the search committee. A good cover letter:

- Introduces who you are by highlighting your research, teaching and service accomplishments during your graduate career.
- Clearly articulates the fit between you and the department/job to which you are applying.

## CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Each search committee will be seeking a unique combination of elements that the particular department and job require. Therefore, a successful cover letter must be tailored to each particular school and position. Research the school and the department to help you determine which aspects of your experience to include and emphasize in your letter. One of the most important distinctions will be between research universities for which you will emphasize your research experience and directions, and teaching universities for which you will emphasize your teaching experience and philosophy and service to the university. The order, content and length of your teaching, research, and service paragraphs will vary based upon the orientation of the particular school to which you are applying.

A cover letter for an academic position is typically longer than a non-academic letter. Your letter should be between 1.5 and 2 pages, not to exceed 2 pages.

Address your letter using contact information as it appears on the job notice. This information should be that of the search committee chair; however, if specific contact information is not listed be sure to ask the university for it, as a generic cover letter is much less effective.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph: Introduction**

- Identifies by title the specific position for which you are applying and where you learned of the position opening.
- Identifies yourself as a student at 'x' university, working on a dissertation under the direction of Professor 'x'.
- Outlines when you expect to have completed your dissertation.
- Lays out the claim that you are a strong candidate for the position, and explains why.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph: Research Experience**

- Outlines research experience and projects (lay out schedule for and expected date of completion if dissertation is not completed).
- Briefly explains research questions and methodological design.



### **3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph: Research Implications**

- Places specific research in more general context.
- Points out future directions for your research.
- Emphasizes links between teaching and research interests.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Paragraph: Teaching Experience**

- Outlines teaching experience and philosophy.
- Utilizes specifics to illustrate dedication and approach to teaching.
- Points readers to pertinent materials available on the internet or in print upon request.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Paragraph: University Service**

- Outlines service to the university if applicable.
- Details involvement in new student recruitment, university government, and university committee participation.

### **Last Paragraph: Conclusion**

- Mentions contact information (including holiday breaks, vacations or other temporary changes).
- Mentions conference attendance plans.
- Conveys willingness to be interviewed.
- Mentions any connection to the school or region (i.e. prior attendance or residence).
- Briefly explains why this particular school/region is of interest to you (programs, location, etc.).
- Lists enclosures and offers to forward additional materials upon request (i.e. writing samples, teaching evaluations, and letters of recommendation).

## **ADDITIONAL POINTERS**

- If your dissertation is not directly related to the position, outline classes and other experiences that qualify you and focus on the big picture of your research instead of the specifics.
- Emphasize characteristics that you like about the particular school.
- Some applicants mention specific professors with whom they would like to work or are interested in. You can do this, but be careful, because it can come off as an insincere form of flattery. If you do mention names, stay general and keep it short.
- Get feedback from professors and friends as you go through multiple drafts.
- Proofread carefully! Proofread at least 3 times, and ask someone else to look at it. Repeat process after every revision.
- Print the letter on good paper, but keep in mind that it will be copied and distributed, so choose white paper.

# WRITING YOUR STATEMENT OF RESEARCH INTERESTS

## INTRODUCTION

Many job advertisements will ask you to submit a statement of your research interests or an outline of your research plans for the future. This will help a particular department further determine your long-term fit with them and also provide a glimpse into a vision of your future research career. You should use this opportunity to convince the search committee that you will be a productive scholar for years to come after joining their department.

There is no standardized format for the statement of research interests (or research plan). The information below is meant to provide general guidelines. Consult colleagues and advisors in your particular field of research to determine the best format for you.

In general, your statement of research interests should be 3-5 pages, 1.5 spaced. You may divide your statement into separate sub-proposals if you like, but this should not lengthen the overall document. If you are unsure of the proper length for your statement, call or e-mail the chair of the hiring committee.

## CONTENT

### Executive Summary

- Depending on the length of your statement, you may want to provide a short abstract summarizing your research goals, motivation, and approach.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Section: Introduction

- Introduce your research topics of interest in an interesting, exciting and relevant fashion.
- Set out your research goals in the form of specific questions you would like to answer.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Section: Elaboration

- Use this section of your statement to show that you have concrete ideas about achieving the research goals you have set out in the introduction.
- Be specific enough to convey the feasibility of your topics, without using too much technical language.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Section: Results

- Briefly discuss the kind of results you expect to generate and how those results will fit into your research plan.
- If you have positive preliminary data, share it. This is one of the most convincing arguments for the feasibility and relevancy of your research.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Section: Conclusion**

- Outline alternative approaches to address your research questions in case your initial approach does not lead to the answers you are seeking.
- Reference other researchers who are doing or have done similar work, and reiterate that your research intends to add to that body of knowledge.

### **ADDITIONAL POINTERS**

- Utilize section headings and bullet points to make your statement more clear.
- Try to include at least one illustrative figure (table, graph, chart) that can summarize your proposed research.
- Outline more than one research idea, with a shared theme, to illustrate the diversity of your plans.
- Communicating the passion you have for your research is a plus, but this alone is not sufficient to convince someone to hire you. Use your statement to justify that passion by placing your work in a context that makes it relevant and important.
- Your future research plans should build on the work you have already done but should not represent a direct extension of that work. It is important that your plan be seen as independent and dynamic. Emphasize new directions.
- Be sure your research ideas are clear and succinct. Many search committees will put a statement aside if it confuses them.
- Be sure to go over your statement with colleagues and advisors, particularly those within your research field, to help clarify and sharpen how you communicate your research plan.
- Tailor your research plan to the institution. If you are sending it to an institution that is primarily concerned with teaching, alter your research plan
  - so that you will be able to carry it out with heavy teaching loads and indicate the possible participation of undergraduate and graduate students.
- Proofread carefully! Proofread at least 3 times, and ask someone else to look at it. Repeat process after every revision.

# WRITING YOUR STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

## INTRODUCTION

Many job advertisements will ask directly for the submission of a statement of teaching philosophy. This statement will clearly articulate your philosophy of learning and teaching, the goals you set for students in a classroom environment, and the implementation of your philosophy in the classroom. The statement of teaching philosophy should be brief – approximately 1-2 pages in length. It is written for a general audience (no technical language) and in the first person.

You may send materials such as student evaluations and syllabi with your statement of teaching philosophy or offer to send them if specifically requested.

## CONTENT

### Philosophy of Learning

- How do you conceptualize learning?
- How do you believe learning occurs?
- How do you facilitate learning in the classroom?
- How have your classroom experiences changed your philosophy of learning?

### Philosophy of Teaching

- What is teaching?
- How do you define the role of the professor and the student in the classroom?
- How do you challenge students given different learning styles and abilities?
- How have your teaching experiences changed your philosophy of teaching?

### Student Goals

- What goals do you set for your students and why?
- What methods and strategies do you employ to assist your students in achieving the goals you have set out?

### Classroom Implementation

- How does the philosophy you outlined affect what you do in the classroom?
- How does your philosophy directly impact your course materials, assignments, and teaching style?
- How have your experiences reflected your philosophy and your goals as a teacher? Use specific examples to contextualize the ideas you have outlined.

### Future Teaching Goals

- You may include a paragraph that outlines your personal goals related to your teaching philosophy and methods.

- Be specific about course goals, projects, and strategies that you would like to implement in the next several years.

## **ADDITIONAL POINTERS**

- Even if a job advertisement does not specifically ask for a statement of teaching philosophy, many people may be asked these questions in an interview setting. Having written your statement will give you the ability to answer these questions clearly.
- It is very helpful to discuss the content of your statement of teaching philosophy with advisors, colleagues, students and others.
- Proofread carefully! Proofread at least 3 times, and ask someone else to look at it. Repeat process after every revision.

# NETWORKING AND THE ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH

## INTRODUCTION

Networking is the systematic development and cultivation of your pool of professional contacts. It puts you in touch with people you might not otherwise encounter. It opens doors. It offers opportunities.

When taken seriously, networking acknowledges the importance of building and maintaining relationships with other people in and out of your field. It assumes that we need each other, not just to get our next job, but to succeed in our current roles. It assumes that none of us knows all we need to know.

## THE PURPOSE OF NETWORKING

The research of Mark Granovetter, a Sociology Professor at Stanford, illustrates some of the power of networking through his research on the “strong link of weak ties.” Like six degrees of separation the strength of weak ties says that big networks of the acquaintances of friends can link you to others beyond your immediate circle. While responding to job ads is a good strategy for finding work, the best way to get in the door is through networking. Depending on which figures you listen to, 60-80 percent of jobs are obtained through networking. Granovetter’s study shows that most people get their jobs through people they don’t see often:

- See people often = 16.7 percent
- See people occasionally = 55.6 percent\*
- See people rarely = 27.8 percent

Networking, then, is a way for you to find out about the hidden job market, get your foot in the door, and explore possibilities while developing professional contacts.

Networking also involves reciprocity. It takes work. People with good networking skills follow-up with those they’ve met. They remember what they’ve learned. They think to send other people notes to thank them for a meeting or send on an article they’ve read that they think might interest the other person. They often refer colleagues on to others in their networks and are willing to act as resources for each other.

## WHAT NETWORKING IS NOT

Networking is not badgering a few friends, relatives, Wagner’s Office of Career Services (OCS), faculty, and telling them, “If you hear of anything, let me know.” There is nothing illicit about approaching friends and family about job openings – it’s just not networking.

## FRAMING/POSITIONING YOURSELF (HOW TO BE REMEMBERED POSITIVELY)

Some networking activities will be very short. When you engage with someone, you want to tell the contact enough about you so that s/he can help with your networking. Ideally, if you leave a positive lasting impression while building your professional network, your

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\* Quoted in Gladwell, Malcolm. “Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg.” New Yorker 11 January 1999  
<[http://www.gladwell.com/1999/1999\\_01\\_11\\_a\\_weisberg.htm](http://www.gladwell.com/1999/1999_01_11_a_weisberg.htm)>

new contact may mention you positively to a potential employer, pass your information on to someone else, or call you later with job leads.

Your goal from a networking interaction, beyond gathering information, is for your contact to be able to describe you to someone else. Each of us has many stories to tell about who we are. What's the framework for the person you'll be talking to? What's the most important information you want them to know about you? Can you describe yourself in a few sentences? What's the most succinct, powerful version of you?

When someone says, "Tell me about yourself," you need to be prepared with an appropriate answer. Replying, "What would you like to know?" puts the onus on the other person, which is expecting too much from them. Make it easy for the other person to "get" you. Try not to assume the listener will draw all the appropriate inferences you want them to. Rattling off a succession of past jobs and why they didn't work out isn't a great strategy, either. If you can't communicate interest in what you're presenting, no one else will be interested.

Think about the point you want to make, and say it. Don't make them work for it. If you have a conclusion you want them to make about you, tell them what it is. For example, if you want them to see how all of your jobs have been leading to a teaching job in public administration, then say, "All of my jobs have been leading to a teaching job in public administration." If you want them to know that you are passionate about researching the inequalities in public education, then say, "I am passionate about researching the inequalities in public education."

## **IMPORTANT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PH.D. STUDENTS**

### **CONFERENCES**

Academic conferences provide an invaluable opportunity to network for Ph.D. candidates. Conferences allow you to have brief, face-to-face interactions with experts in your field as well as potential colleagues.

#### **Before the conference:**

- Research who will be speaking on relevant panels. You may want to read their bio, look at what types of courses they teach, and read some of their work.
- Be prepared to dress as if you are going on an interview.

#### **At the conference:**

- Collect an attendance list and review it at the beginning of the conference to note people in attendance who you would like to meet. The attendance list will also be important for following up after the conference.
- Remember that conferences are usually a time for brief introductions. You should introduce yourself, chat briefly, and ask the contact their preferred time and method of having a more in-depth conversation after the conference. Unless your contact indicates they want to have a longer conversation at the conference, plan to have a more in-depth interaction later.
- Ask for business cards from the people you meet.

## **TARGETED EVENTS**

Events at Wagner and other academic/research institutions in New York City provide wonderful opportunities to meet researchers and academics working in your field. In addition, while conferences are heavily attended by other Ph.D. students, there may be less competition at events to speak to leaders in your field. Before attending, know something about the speakers and also about others who may be in attendance (such as board members of the host organization). Some possible events include:

- Wagner-sponsored speaker events.
- NYU events.
- Lectures at outside organizations such as Demos, the Drum Major Institute, The Century Foundation, and the Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute.

## **TIPS FOR NETWORKING AT CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS**

Approaching a stranger can be daunting, especially if you are a bit shy. It may be helpful to remember that most people truly enjoy meeting others with similar interests. Some tips to make the experience easier:

- Introduce yourself on the way into the event. If you see someone in the elevator or waiting in line at a registration table, this can be a good opportunity to say hello, introduce yourself, and ask what made them interested in the event.
- Write your organization and/or field of interest on your nametag (largely/clearly). This gives other people an easy way of beginning a conversation with you.
- It can be easier to approach someone who is sitting alone or to join a table of two or three than to join the conversation of a large group or a table that is almost full. Chances are that the person sitting alone or the small group will be relieved to have you join them.
- Ask questions. Inquiring into the interests and experiences of others is a great way to gather information.
- If food is involved, use proper etiquette and remember not to eat like a starving student.
- Be alert to other's body language. Pay attention to red lights such as the contact stepping away or looking at their watch. Green lights such as the contact asking you questions or stepping towards you are a signal to engage more.

## **NETWORKING THROUGH INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS**

Informational interviews are a form of networking through meetings you initiate with someone whose job, organization, or career path interest you. They are also a great way to make professional contacts in a particular field. Making a good impression will make it easier for your contact to keep you in mind as opportunities arise – whether in their university or research institution or in a peer institution. Your interviewee will only refer you to someone else to talk to if they are favorably impressed by you.

You can learn more about best practices by reviewing the NYU Wagner Networking and Informational Interview How To Guide.



## **FOLLOWING UP AND MAINTAINING YOUR NETWORK**

Follow-up on helpful interactions with a thank you note. Thank everyone who provides you with a lead or contact. Since the academic job search can take several months and since contacts can provide helpful ongoing relationships, it is important to keep your network alive by letting people know when they were helpful. Positive feedback will encourage your contacts to do more on your behalf!

You can keep your network active by sending contacts interesting and appropriate articles or event announcements.

When building your professional networks, you will have put a lot of energy into finding others who share your passions and interests. Once you find a job, there is no reason to let that network go. Staying in touch and continuing to build professional relationships will provide a valuable network of contacts as you begin teaching, publishing your research, and as you seek tenure.

# ON CAMPUS VISIT: TOURS, INTERVIEWS, AND SOCIALIZING

## OVERVIEW

Giving your job talk is the highlight in what is usually a two-day visit consisting of lunches, dinners, tours and interviews with faculty, administrators and students. It is important to think about each of these situations in advance so that you can make a positive impression in each setting.

The academic interview season can be a trying time. You must expect to travel extensively, and though most universities will reimburse you for expenses, you will likely need to cover the initial expenses for travel, hotel, and food, as reimbursement is not immediate. You will also need to invest in professional clothing suitable for multiple days at each location and multiple climates.

Though it may seem logical to take extended trips that encompass multiple schools in a particular region, keep in mind that by the end of these trips you may be so exhausted that your enthusiasm and performance suffer substantially. Schedule breaks for rest and rejuvenation between school visits.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

You should always request a detailed agenda before arriving at each university. The following are generic campus visit schedules to give you an idea of what your agenda may look like. This is a particularly intensive schedule; your visit may be shorter and include most, but not all, of these activities.

### Day 1:

- Arrive at airport. Campus representative will pick you up, or take taxi to 'large chain' hotel
- Casual dinner with university host (may include graduate students and other faculty members)

### Day 2:

- 8:00-8:45 - Arrive on campus and meet with chair of faculty search committee
- 8:45-9:30 - Brief tour of campus by student
- 9:30-10:30 - Meet with students (undergraduate and/or graduate)
- 10:30-11:30 - Meet with chair of department
- 11:30-1:00 - Lunch with department faculty and search committee
- 1:00-2:30 - Job Talk
- 2:30-4:00 - 30-minute interviews with professors
- 5:30 - Dinner with search committee

### Day 3:

- 10:00-11:00 - 1-3 meetings with Dean, Provost, and/or President
- 11:00-12:00 - Teaching Demonstration

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**

### **QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED:**

- Tell us about your dissertation. (Make sure to have a short, succinct summary version to share with varied audiences.)
- What sparked your interest in this topic?
- How does your research relate to the existing literature?
- How would you involve undergraduates in your research?
- When do you expect to complete your dissertation?
- What are your short- and long-term research plans?
- What journals would you like to publish in?
- Where do you hope to submit your dissertation articles/book?
- What possible outside funding sources exist for your research?
- What is your teaching philosophy/motivation?
- How willing would you be to teach xyz course?
- If you could design any course, what would it be?
- How would you teach xyz course, and what textbooks/readings would you use?
- What are your greatest successes and challenges as a teacher (Back up your answer with specific evidence)?
- Would you like to teach/advise graduate students?
- What other aspects of the university would you like to get involved in?
- Why did you apply to this school?

### **QUESTIONS YOU MAY ASK:**

#### **Research**

- How much interdepartmental collaboration occurs at this university?
- Are there cross departmental seminars?
- What kind of research support is there for junior faculty (i.e., research assistants, grants)?
- Is there summer support for junior faculty?
- Are there opportunities at the school for working with local government agencies?

#### **Teaching**

- What is the average class size?
- What is the mix of day/night time courses?
- What is the teaching load?
- What is the decision-making process for who teaches what?
- How much opportunity is there to design and teach electives?
- How are professors evaluated?

#### **Students**

- How many students are in your program?
- What is the mix of doctoral/master's/undergraduate students?
- What is the mix of full-time/part-time students?
- How diverse is the student body?
- Are students required to do a thesis project?
- What type of work do students pursue after finishing the program?
- How many faculty members work with doctoral students?

### **Generic**

- What is the department's vision for the future?
- Tell me about your work?
- Describe the department's tenure process.
- How many hours do you work?
- How is this department governed?

### **For Administrators**

- What are the university's short-term and long-term strategic plans?
- Does the university have any specific goals for your department?
- Does the university support interdisciplinary teaching/research?

### **For Students**

- How far along in the program are you?
- How do you like the program?
- What type of work do you do?
- What do you plan to do upon graduation?
- Do you feel that anything is missing from the curriculum?
- What are the qualities you look for in new faculty members?

## **DINING ETIQUETTE**

As part of the job talk interview, you will probably have at least one meal with faculty from the department. You have a lot to remember on the interview day; the last thing you need to worry about is what fork to use. Reviewing the dining etiquette below may help you relax and keep the focus on your teaching and research skills. Some tips to keep in mind:

- Follow your hosts' lead in terms of what to order. Don't order the most expensive item on the menu.
- Avoid messy items such as spaghetti or lobster.
- As a general rule, avoid alcohol. If everyone else is drinking and you can handle it, you may want to have one drink.
- Don't eat as if it is your last meal. You don't want to come across as a starving student. Also, eating a huge meal may make you sleepy for the rest of the day.
- Remember the main point is to see whether you can converse and conduct yourself well in a social setting.

If you want a refresher course, NYU's Wasserman Center for Career Development offers a practice three-course interview meal called "Dining for Success" every semester. Check their website at <http://www.nyu.edu/life/resources-and-services/career-development.html> for more information.

## **ADDITIONAL POINTERS:**

- If the university has not included an informal meeting with students in your schedule, request one. It is important to show your interest in the students, both undergraduate and graduate.
- If you will be required to give a teaching demonstration, make sure that you have prepared your content, style, and material well in advance!

- Be sure to ask directly for anything you need, like a bathroom break or a drink.
- No matter how casual the conversation, make sure that you do not gossip or speak negatively about the school, professors, or students.
- After your campus visit, send an e-mail, card or letter to everyone you met (including the administrative staff who organized your visit) thanking them and saying something specific that you enjoyed learning about their work, the school, or from your general conversation.
- Keeping a journal can help you remember what you liked and did not like about each school.

# **GIVING YOUR JOB TALK**

## **PURPOSE**

Once you have been invited to give a job talk, you have already distinguished yourself as a top candidate for the position. However, your job talk performance will often determine whether or not you receive an offer.

The academic job talk is a university/department's opportunity to evaluate you as researcher, colleague and teacher. For many attendees, this will be their only exposure to you, thus extensive preparation and practice of your talk are key in the academic job search process.

## **CONTEXT**

Your job talk will likely be scheduled during a two-day university visit and may fall anywhere from the very beginning to the very end of a schedule that includes group meals, tours, and interviews with faculty, administrators and students. Though the average time may vary by university and discipline, the average job talk will last between 45 and 55 minutes, including a question and answer period. You should decide if you'd prefer to take questions as you go, or if you'd like the audience to hold all questions until the question period following your presentation - either is acceptable.

## **CONTENT AND STRUCTURE**

The subject of your job talk can be related to or part of your dissertation or a current research topic that you intend to continue working on. Whatever your topic, make sure that you know it very well, and will be able to confidently answer any challenging questions that may come up.

Pay attention to the norms in your field and amongst your faculty to help determine the structure of your presentation (i.e., how long to spend on methodology, policy implications and other possible components.). Contextualize your research by linking it to larger issues and emphasize the unique contribution you have made or intend to make to the relevant body of knowledge and make sure to indicate implications for future research. Overall, make sure that you are presenting a compelling, relevant, coherent package about which you are enthusiastic and confident.

## **PRESENTATION**

The audience at a job talk is usually varied, so your presentation should be accessible to listeners outside of your area of expertise. Make sure that you ask the university about the make-up of your audience ahead of time so that you can tailor your presentation to them. Do not simplify your material; simply make it accessible.

Visual aids and/or handouts can be very useful tools for your job talk. However, it is important to keep them basic and informative. It is recommended that any visual aid contain no more than seven pieces of information. Also, avoid distracting graphics such as colorful backgrounds and/or fonts, unrelated pictures and/or decorations, and tables or charts that are too small and/or detailed to read from a distance.

Make sure to communicate your technology needs to the school ahead of time and always have a backup method in case of technological failure.

Your presentation will be followed by a question and answer session. These sessions will vary from dead silence to aggressive and even hostile questioning. Many audience members will use this portion of the job talk to evaluate your potential as a teacher, as evidenced by your ability to think on your feet, interact with listeners, and respond directly and succinctly to questions. Make sure to take all questions seriously and address them directly. If you need a moment to compose a response, say so. The end of this question and answer session will mark the end of your official job talk.

## **ADDITIONAL POINTERS**

- Inquire ahead of time how long your job talk is supposed to be and time your talk exactly so that it takes 5 minutes less than the allotted time.
- Ask for your agenda in advance! This may include asking for information such as the atmosphere and size of the location, how large the audience will be and what kind of people it will consist of and, finally, the technical knowledge your audience will have.
- Ask ahead of time for 15 to 30 minutes to yourself before your presentation, preferably in the actual location, to get composed, relaxed and prepared.
- Make sure to bring water in case it is not provided.
- When someone is asking a question, use the opportunity to take a drink of water.
- In addition to quenching your thirst, it has been pointed out that this can ease some of the awkwardness in listening to and waiting for the end of a question.
- Remember to talk about your 'research' and not your 'dissertation'.
- Practice in front of as many people as you can, preferably in conditions that mimic the reality of a job talk.
- Practice, practice, practice!

# NEGOTIATING AN ACADEMIC OFFER

## INTRODUCTION

Discussing salary and other job benefits can be a nerve-racking experience. However, it is important to remember that finding a good fit between a candidate and an employer involves numerous conversations to ensure that both parties get their needs met. Keep in mind that you are making an investment in an academic or research institution as much as it is investing in you.

In the academic job search, salaries are sometimes less negotiable than other aspects of the job, including research support, access to administrative assistance, relocation expenses, and teaching load.

## NEGOTIATING PRINCIPLES

Salary can come up during the application process, the interview, and when an offer is finally made. The key to successful negotiation rests in your approach to the subject and can be resolved with solid:

- Analysis
- Planning
- Practice

The following tips and guidelines will assist you in successfully seeing your way through this process.

How you think about and approach salary and job discussions will have an impact on the outcome. The following 5 principles can guide your discussions and lead you to a successful outcome:

**1) Salary is best discussed when the employer has made you an offer**

Discussing salary and other aspects of a position implies that you have enough information to know what the job is worth. Chances are that you don't have enough information to make that determination early in the interview process.

**2) Salary should be viewed in the context of a host of issues related to employment.**

People accept employment for many reasons. Each aspect of an offer is only one piece of a package that can include:

- Research support
- Reputation of the institution
- Opportunity for professional development
- Opportunity to work with specific individuals
- Flexible work schedules
- Health benefits
- Time off (vacation, sick days, personal days, holidays)
- Life insurance
- Pension plan
- Disability insurance



- Domestic partner benefits
- Location
- Connection with the mission of an institution
- Professional title
- Tuition assistance for partners/children
- Job search assistance for partners

### **3) Know what you are worth and what the market will bear**

For salary negotiations, find out what you're worth. Do your research on typical compensation packages. Know what the market will bear. If possible, find out what the salary range is for the specific job for which you're interviewing. For academic positions, the salary may only cover 9-10 months of the year. You may be able to negotiate summer support at the beginning. Information on salaries can be found in:

- Job descriptions
- Informational interviews
- The Chronicle of Higher Education: <https://data.chronicle.com/>

### **4) Most offers are negotiable**

There is no reason to expect that the first offer an employer makes will be the best offer.

### **5) It is okay to ask for what you want once the offer has been made**

If an employer makes you an offer, you have already proven the value you will bring to them – the WIIFT (What's In It For Them). An employer already has a vested interest in you if they've made you an offer, and they don't want to start the process all over from square one with someone else. Once they want you and prove it by making you an offer, you can focus on the WIIFM (What's In It For Me). It is highly unlikely that an offer will be withdrawn if you try to negotiate a better package before you accept the offer.

## NEGOTIATING THE OFFER

Never accept a job offer right on the spot. Take time to consider the details carefully and make sure there are no unanswered questions. Get information on the complete package. Be gracious and appreciative.

- Express appreciation in receiving the offer
- Get as many details on the entire package as possible (salary, start date, title, research support, teaching load)
- Ask for time to consider the offer (in the academic job market, two weeks is a fairly acceptable standard)
- Ask if you can continue to call them before the decision deadline if you have any questions
- Thank them again for the offer  
    “I’m delighted that you want to hire me, and I appreciate receiving your offer. Can you tell me about (relocation expenses, teaching load, research support, the review process)? I need to think about your offer in relation to other possibilities. Can I get back to you (next week, in two weeks)? Is it okay if I call you before then if I have any questions? Thank you again!”

Now, consider if the position is right for you in a variety of aspects. Some guiding questions can help you make a thoughtful decision:

- Is your interest in the institution still strong?
- Is the position consistent with your long-term goals?
- How will this position affect your personal relationships?
- Is the salary acceptable?
- How are other elements of the package? (teaching load, research support, title)
- How does this job compare with your ideal job?

If you are satisfied with the package as offered, and you want to accept the position, you do not have to negotiate. You should know, however, that the first offer is not always the best possible offer. Also, most employers expect you to negotiate.

You should negotiate in good faith only. If you are considering other institutions, contact those employers, inform them of your offer, and inquire about the status of your application. If they are interested in you and have flexibility, they may speed up their decision-making process. Be aware, however, that you may have to make a decision before you have complete information on all possible offers. You should only accept an offer if you intend to stick with it.

### ELEMENTS THAT MAY BE NEGOTIATED

#### Relocation and housing

An academic institution may be willing to pay relocation expenses. If you are coming from far away, you may also be able to negotiate reimbursement for a trip to look for housing.

**Teaching load**

Some institutions allow first- and second-year professors to have a reduced teaching load. This may not apply at small liberal arts colleges where the focus may be more on teaching rather than publishing. Questions to consider include how many courses you will be teaching and how many different courses you will be expected to prepare.

**Research support**

While this is more applicable in the sciences, you may be able to negotiate funding for research, especially during the first and second summers.

**Support for dual career couples**

Some universities offer job placement or search assistance to partners/spouses. This may be standard or you may need to negotiate access.

**Other:**

- Travel funding for conferences
- Supervision of student activities, advisees, graduate assistants
- Salary
- Tuition assistance for children, partners, spouses

**FIRST FOLLOW UP**

If you want to negotiate the offer, you must be clear about what it is that you want improved. Negotiate from the standpoint of what you bring to the institution. Continue to express enthusiasm.

Before the date you must get back to them, call the employer and say:

“I’m still very interested in the position, and I believe I can bring x,y and z to the university. I’m wondering, is it possible to enhance the offer in terms of (salary, relocation expenses, research support, teaching load, opportunities for review)?

Let them speak first. Do not fill in the silence -see what they have to say.

**Yes:**

- If they give you what you want, thank them and tell them you’ll get back to them by the deadline

**Maybe:**

- If they say they’ll have to get back to you, ask when you should be hearing from them or when you should call them back
- If they say what did you have in mind:  
Ask “what do you think is possible?”, or  
Give them a range of what you are looking for

**No**

- If they say no, say: “Okay, thanks, I’ll still get back to you by \_\_\_

## **SECOND FOLLOW UP**

Many people choose to continue to negotiate. They have found that coming back to the negotiating table a second time can bring added rewards. After the first try but before the date you must give your decision, here's what you can do:

- If the package was enhanced, you can say: "I really appreciate that! It is certainly helpful. Would you also be willing to consider \_\_\_?; or "Is this the very best you can offer regarding \_\_\_?"
- If the initial response was "maybe": "Have you given any thought to whether the offer can be enhanced in any way?"
- If the initial response was "No": "What if/in lieu of \_\_\_\_\_, would you consider \_\_\_?"
- If nothing more is offered: "Hmmm. Well, I will call you as promised by \_\_\_"

## **THIRD FOLLOW UP**

Some people have successfully negotiated by going through this process three times. Once the negotiations are finished, it is appropriate for the employer to put the offer in writing. It is okay for you to ask.

## **DECLINING AN OFFER**

Should you decide to turn down an offer of employment, you should follow-up your declination with a formal letter. This professional courtesy should leave the employer with a good impression of you and may help should your paths cross again. The letter of decline should include:

- Statement of appreciation for the offer
- Name of the position offered
- Statement that leaves the door open for possible future contact

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Wagner's Office of Career Services (OCS) periodically offers workshops on negotiating, has career counselors who can advise you during the negotiation process, publishes a guide on "Negotiating the Offer," and provides a resource room with helpful information.