

# **THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET**

AN INTRO FOR EVERYONE

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# THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET

- **Like all markets, many things are out of your control...**
  - What jobs get posted each year (determined by funding, history, deans and admins, departmental politics, etc.)
  - What the program is looking for (often the program doesn't even know)
  - Who is on the search committee
  - Who else applies for the position
- **...And some things are in your control:**
  - Your record: research, teaching, CV
  - Your job materials
  - Your relationships with your letter writers (sort of)
  - Your branding, reputation, networking, etc.

# TIMELINE: THE TENURE TRACK MARKET

- Varies by field and by country

July–	TT job postings begin
Oct–Jan	Apps due
Nov–Feb	Long list interviews if applicable (~25-40 people) (usually via Skype, or at a national conference)
Dec–Mar	Short list campus interviews (~4-6 people)
Feb–May	Offers made for TT positions
Summer	Job begins

# TIMELINE: POSTDOC & SECONDARY MARKET

- Varies by field and by country

July–	Many postdoc fellowships and grant-funded visiting professorships are posted (=Round 1)
Oct–Jan	Apps due for Round 1 postdocs/visiting positions
Dec–Mar	Interviews for Round 1 applications
Jan–May	Secondary market opens (these tend to be one- or two-year teaching positions that fill in for faculty who will be on leave, etc.)
Feb–June	Secondary market interviews
Summer, Fall	Job begins

- The interview and selection process for these jobs tend to be condensed versions of the primary TT market, but more focused on your skills for postdocs.

# EXAMPLE TIMELINE FROM GRAD YEAR 1

- YEAR 1** Establish the groundwork for your research program.  
Gain experience.  
Apply for conferences, fellowships, etc.  
Start building mentor networks.
- YEAR 2** Start building your outward brand.  
Present at conferences, start publishing ASAP.
- YEAR 3** Publish, present, publish, present, repeat.  
Start building external networks, of mentors/collaborators.  
Get invited to do external talks (e.g., brown bags at other unis).  
Start formulating dissertation and doing research, writing, etc.
- YEAR 4** **“Practice” job market year.**  
Apply for dissertation year fellowships.  
Be very visible, publish and present more.  
Teach a class as primary instructor of record if you can.  
Dissertation is well under way
- YEAR 5** **“Real” job market year.**

# ELEMENTS OF A JOB APPLICATION

- Cover letter
- Curriculum Vitae
- Research statement
- Teaching statement and portfolio
- Work samples
- Reference Letters

## Other materials

- Website
- Diversity statement
- Transcripts

## Extracurricular

- Presentation at a national conference the year you're on the market
- The persona of a professor (not a grad student).

# COVER LETTER

- Usually 1-2 page summary in business letter format that outlines:
  - Your research program and future
  - Your teaching philosophy, background, and future
  - Why you would be a good fit for the job, department, university.
- May be somewhat redundant with statements of research and teaching, framed more in the context of each particular job.
- Please DO use official letterhead, which you can download from UCM:  
<http://images.ucmerced.edu/>

# CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

- **Not the same as a resume!**
  - Check out the CVs of scholars in your field, both junior and senior. Use those as a model, and then check with your faculty mentors.
- **Elements**
  - Professional appointments (usu. the academic ones)
  - Education
  - Publications
  - Grants and Honors (or Awards, or Fellowships)
  - Presentations
    - Invited presentations
    - Refereed presentations
  - Research experience
  - Teaching experience
  - Service
    - To profession
    - To university/department
  - Skills
  - (some optional sections include e.g., outreach, etc.)



# RESEARCH STATEMENT

- **A 2-page statement of your research program**
  - What is the overall research program and direction?
  - What have you done in your past research?
  - What is the future of your research program? What do you have planned for the coming years, e.g., to get you through the fellowship, to get you through to tenure?
- **In all these statements:**
  - Use examples and evidence to back up your statements.
  - Pitch to an intelligent but maybe not as specialized audience. You want people in the department but maybe not in your exact subfield to understand the impact and importance of your research, too.

# TEACHING STATEMENT + PORTFOLIO

- **A 2-page statement of your teaching program**
  - What is your overall approach to teaching? overall research program and direction?
  - Support all of your statements with example evidence! Be rational, not overly emotional.
  - What is your past teaching and mentoring experience? Don't forget that supervising RA's in a lab *is* relevant mentoring experience!
  - What are you prepared to teach for the program you're applying to?
- **Teaching portfolio may also include:**
  - Teaching evaluations
  - Sample syllabuses
  - Teaching-specific reference letter, if your other ref letters cannot address your teaching.

# WORK SAMPLES

- 2–5 representative publications
  - Best if:
    - First-authored
    - Journal publication
    - Already published
    - Shows a bit of breadth but can still be tied into a cohesive research program.
- Send as many as the application requests and no more. Point to your website for more publications in your cover letter.

# REFERENCE LETTERS

- **3–5 reference letters**
  - Usually your Ph.D. advisor
  - Maybe one or two members from your advisory committee
  - Maybe a collaborator or two from outside your Ph.D. institution
  - Typically all professors, researchers, and/or educators
- **Help your letter writers**
  - Give them as much warning as possible (at least 1 month).
  - Give them all the info you can, about the position and about your dossier.
  - Send gentle reminders.

# ATTRIBUTES OF A COMPETITIVE CANDIDATE

*(from Kelsky 2015)*

- **Productivity**
  - A research program that's spawned pubs, talks, grants, teaching, collaborations in the past, current, and future.
- **Professionalism**
  - Carry yourself as a colleague and peer, not as a grad student. (though be aware this doesn't mean 'be obnoxious and insufferably arrogant.')
  - <http://theprofessorisin.com/2013/05/10/the-six-ways-youre-acting-like-a-grad-student-and-how-thats-killing-you-on-the-job-market/>
- **Autonomy**
  - You're your own scholar, not a subordinate.
- **Self-Promotion**
  - Know your brand and how it fits into the field.
- **Collegiality**
  - People can get along with you. You show genuine interest in others.
- **A plan**
  - You have a future plan that's already been set in motion that will get you through the first stages of your postdoc/faculty career.

# APPROACH THE MARKET LIKE A RESEARCHER

- **Do your homework:**
  - Track the job market as the years go by. What are the hiring trends? How do they related to you (you don't have to follow the trends, but you do have to know them)? What are the fields you can apply to? That candidates like you are successful in?
  - Follow the profiles of recent successful candidates in the field. What do their CV's look like? Which conferences do they go to? Where do they publish? Which grants have they applied for? What (objectively) made them successful? What tips do they have for you for the market, given their recent experiences?
  - Draw upon the experience of your faculty mentors : What do they know from their experience on hiring committees? What do they know from their colleagues at other universities?
  - Try to get job market materials from recently hired colleagues as examples.
  - Follow the departments that are hiring. What are the focuses? What do the faculty work on? Where are the gaps? Where might you fit in?

# APPROACH THE MARKET LIKE A RESEARCHER

- **Step back and be objectively critical of your own dossier:**
  - What should a strong application look like? In what ways does my dossier achieve this; in what ways should it be improved?
  - What are the gaps in my CV? Concentrate on filling these in.
  - What are the weaknesses in logic on my written materials (cover letter, research and teaching statements)? Are certain phrases unclear? Murky? Meaningless? Unsubstantiated by fact? Fix these!
  - What are the strengths of my application? Highlight these.
- **It's hard to critique oneself, but in research, we often see our weaknesses first, so use this critical, objective eye when viewing your own materials.**
  - Sometimes it helps to pretend your looking at someone else's dossier.
- **Ask others to critically review your dossier:**
  - Get drafts together early enough to make several go arounds with your faculty mentors and letter writers.
  - Don't forget to have them critique your CV, too! This should happen early and often throughout your graduate career.
  - Form a writing and critique group with your peers on the market. The critiques are hard to hear, but helpful.

# USEFUL JOB MARKET ADVICE RESOURCES

- **Your faculty mentors.**
  - Use a team of them, get many perspectives.
  - Keep in mind that senior faculty went through the market in a different climate, but have experience on the hiring committee side of things.
  - Junior faculty went through the market recently and are likely to remember personal experiences.
- **Your colleagues who have been recently successful.**
- [The Professor Is In](#) (blog and book)
- [Chronicle Vitae](#) blog