

Going on the Market: Preparing for the Academic Job Search

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What You Need

- CV
- Cover Letters
- Letters of Reference
- Research Summary / Proposal
- Teaching Philosophy / Portfolio / Demonstration
- Job Talk / Chalk Talk
- Start-up Budget

What You REALLY Need

- Vision
- Organization
- Patience
- Confidence
- A few nice outfits
- Stamina
- Sense of humor
- Resilience
- Plan B

CV Format

- There is no single correct format
- Highlight strengths, accomplishments & experience
 - Skimmable
 - 30 second test
 - Scrutiny-proof
- Organize with CATEGORIES
 - Arranged in order of importance
 - Reverse chronological order within categories

CV Style

- Place most important information:
 - First page
 - Left side of page
 - Beginning of sections
 - In columns
- Use highlighting judiciously
- Use action verbs to describe experience
- Avoid pronouns, articles, jargon
- Use sentence fragments
- PROOF, PROOF, PROOF
- Ask friends to PROOF

Common CV Mistakes

- Don't use another CV as a TEMPLATE
- Avoid "TOO MANY WORDS"
- Don't include PERSONAL information, e.g.
 - Marital status
 - Date of birth
 - Citizenship
 - Gender
 - Photograph
 - Native country, language
- Be very careful attributing pre-published papers
- Don't get too creative with paper, style, format

Cover Letters

- Serves as a writing sample
- Highlight and elaborate on important aspects of your experience
- Don't reiterate the CV in prose!
- Should STAND ALONE, but is clearly linked to CV
- Should be tailored to each job

Cover Letters - Content

- How you learned about the position and your current status
- Concise summary of past/current research & significance to field
- Future research interests
- Teaching qualifications & interests
- Why interested in that department/university
- How you would contribute to the department

Letters of Reference

- How many?
- From whom?
- How to manage?
- Special circumstances

Research Statement

- Purpose
- Context - Significance - Relevance - Vision
- Research Summary and Research Plan
- Format
 - 3-5 pages covering past & next 3-5 years work
 - Use headings, subheadings, bullets, white space
 - Avoid page-long paragraphs

Teaching Philosophy

- BRIEF (1-2) pages statement:
 - Approach to teaching
 - Illustrate with examples
 - Areas of teaching interest
 - Potential courses you could teach
 - Don't restate teaching experience from CV
- Tailor to the institution
- Take it seriously, write it well
- Demonstrate COMMITMENT to teaching
- Important for research- & teaching-focused schools

Teaching Portfolio

- Usually submitted upon request
- Can include:
 - Teaching philosophy
 - Quantitative evidence of teaching excellence
 - Letters of reference from students
 - Selected or complete student evaluations
 - Sample syllabi and/or course descriptions
- Modular organization to tailor to institution

Teaching Demonstration

- Talk with chair/current professor
 - Your own topic or topic from syllabus?
 - Class size and composition
 - What has been covered so far?
 - Lecture or small seminar?
- Engage with students
 - Meet some students beforehand
 - Distribute name cards
 - Defuse students' discomfort – discuss expectations

Job Talk

■ Prepare

- Find out their expectations
- Consider audience
- Structure the talk
- Include relevant past research and point toward future research goals

■ Practice

- With your colleagues, mentors, the mirror
- Q&A helps you tighten the talk, eliminate confusion

Job Talk

- Deliver
 - Ask for time to set-up and prepare yourself
 - Thank the audience and your hosts
 - Speak with enthusiasm and confidence
 - Recognize your collaborators
 - Make eye contact with audience
 - Ignore the inevitable sleepers!

Chalk Talk

- Casual discussion without slides
- Discuss research agenda and specific aims
- Describe methodology, feasibility, potential outcomes or obstacles
- Encourage interactive discussion

Start-up Budget

- Be prepared
 - Submit prior to or during campus visit
 - Consult with advisor and recent hires
 - Prepare longer version of research proposal? 5-15 pages
- Include estimates for:
 - Laboratory and computer equipment & supplies
 - Salaries: summer, technicians, postdocs, grad students
 - Space requirements – office, lab, computational, meeting, animal colonies, special equipment
 - Specify HVAC and other needs for space & equipment

Questions?

An online tutorial of this presentation is available at:
<http://www.ocs.fas.harvard.edu/students/gsas/job-search.htm>