

TIPS FOR THE PHD JOB MARKET

Ivan Rudik, Gabe Lade, Wendong Zhang

Iowa State University, 09-07-2016

3 General Categories for Academic Institutions

1. **Ph. D. granting institutions – Research Focused (Focus of this talk)**
2. State universities or college regional campuses
 - Need to have proven teaching effectiveness
 - May need to give class seminar in addition to or in combination with the research job talk
3. Small universities or colleges offering a liberal arts curriculum
 - Extremely value teaching - philosophy, approach etc.
 - Need proof of interest in teaching and effectiveness
 - Often prefer candidates with liberal arts background

*Each institution will be interested in different qualities in it's job applicants.

What the Committee is Looking For

- Credentials (Skills and accomplishments)
 - This will make sure you get an interview from 200 applicants
- Motivation (Why them and clear career goals)
 - Liberal arts care even more about it
 - Future research plans as opposed to what you have done
- Fit (Potential for work environment and collegiality)
 - Interpersonal skills are extremely important in flyouts, even after getting the job

General tips

- Your market begins before your fifth year
- Take advantage of networking opportunities
 - Conferences (actually talk to people)
 - Visiting speakers
 - Summer schools
- Your reputation precedes you
 - Hopefully in a good way
- Every interaction can influence job prospects

Timeline: Overview

- 3rd years:
 - **Third year paper**
 - What will be your job market paper?
 - Will you have more papers? A publication?
- 4th years:
 - **Oral exam**
 - Why is this a good JMP?
 - In what areas are you an expert? (policy, data, methodology, teaching?)
- 5th years+:
 - **Job market**
 - Can't change the facts now
 - A test of how well you answered the above questions and how you package your answers

Timeline: Job Market Year

- Early summer:
 - Get serious about JMP (doesn't mean start it now)
 - Finalize CV, statements, etc
 - Have a sense of what you need to do to finish JMP
 - Confirm letter writers
- Late Summer/early fall:
 - Get JMP in top form, **schedule practice talks**
 - Make hotel/plane reservations
 - Give JMP to advisors
- Sep-Dec:
 - Check JOE/EJM/etc, talk with advisors on where to apply
- Early Sep-Oct: finalize packet
- Mid-Nov or earlier: send packets
- Dec: **schedule mock interviews**

Role of Advisor/Committee/Faculty

- Provide feedback on paper and presentation
- Provide info on openings and interest from employers
- Contact potential employers about students on the market
- Mock interviews
- **Your role:** keep advisors in the loop on interviews, flyouts, offers, interests

The Job Market Paper

- The JMP is very important, very little can make up for a weak one
 - Check with advisor about including a second paper
- Make the abstract and intro perfect: write and rewrite and rewrite
 - Goal is to appeal to many economists
 - Ask different people to give you comments on these parts
- Consider the title
- Goldin and Katz have good writing tips, read and use them
- JMP != a publication, show off your skills

Questions you need to answer before the market

- What ARE you? → # of jobs, # of competitors
- Where do you want to go? Where do you not want to go?
- Are you willing to take a postdoc? Visiting position? Move abroad?
- Are you ready for the market?

Finding out about jobs

- Types of jobs: research, teaching, private and public sector
- Start early with the JOE, especially ag folks
- Jobs are continually posted on JOE/EJM
 - Record listing information carefully the first time (i.e., what you have to do to submit, deadline, what they want)
- There may be other sites for jobs in your field
- Have a rough personal ranking of schools
- Keep a list of schools you're unsure about applying to

Preparing Applications

- CV
- Research statement/dissertation abstract
- Teaching statement/evaluations
- Cover letter templates
 - Different for research vs teaching vs industry
 - Customize for idiosyncratic reasons
- Let letter writers know **early**
- Personal website
- Transcripts
- Example of course syllabi
- Professional photo
- Keep all of this organized

Applications

- **BE ORGANIZED**
- I (Ivan) used an excel file
 - Mail merge
- Expect this to take a lot of time, you won't get a lot else done
- Make sure your letters are getting submitted
- Non-ag students: send out 100+ applications ($MC \approx 0$, $MB > 0$)
- Ag students:

Making Hotel / Travel Arrangements

- Early sept: make hotel and travel arrangements
 - Pop quiz: when's the first day to reserve hotels?
- Consider delays getting to Chicago (arrive early)
- May get interviews late, or rescheduled if sick (leave late Monday)
 - Meetings are Friday to Sunday
- Get a flu shot
- Book hotels as soon as humanly possible (right when the site opens)

After applications

- Set up N mock interviews
 - N is strictly positive, definitely more than 1, probably more than 2
 - Start with classmates, maybe advisor, then do more with non-advisors, faculty not in your field
 - Be able to talk about your research naturally
- Finalize paper and presentation (flyouts may come early)
- Send “signals” through the AEA website
 - Places you would go (and they would plausibly hire you), but they don’t know this

Scheduling interviews

- Calls start coming the week or two after thanksgiving
- Be ready for phone calls during the day (carry a notebook with your schedule)
- Keep your advisor updated
- Make an excel file for scheduling
- Leave at least 30 minutes between interviews unless in the same hotel
- Be strategic with order
- EJM's website is nice for scheduling but not used by everyone
- Remember: you're a potential colleague, not a grad student

AEA/ASSA Meetings

- Know where to go ahead of time
 - Hotel (walk or cab?)
 - What's the room number?
 - Leave plenty of time
 - Have food, water, internet
 - A professional way to take notes
- Be on time
 - Knock if they don't open the door, right on the minute
- Be polite and professional
 - Economists are everywhere
- Look professional
 - Suit, no backpacks

Interviews

- 2 minute summary, 5-10 minute summary (all nested)
 - Expect interruptions and adjust
 - You're having a conversation
- Questions about non-JMP and future research
- Teaching
- “Do you have any questions?”
 - Not necessarily about getting info
- What are interviews for?
 - Looking for a colleague, no bad surprises
- Know your interviewers, be prepared for them to (not) know you
- **BE ENTHUSIASTIC**

Flyouts

- Invitations start right after the meetings: leverage flyouts
- Usually 1-2 days:
 - 1-on-1 interviews with faculty/dean/provost/students
 - Job talk
 - Dinner, city tour, etc
- Info: flight, visa, hotel, transport, etc
- Always be polite and professional
- Own a nice winter coat
- You are not a grad student
- **BE ENTHUSIASTIC**

Job Talk

- Perfect the first 5-15 minutes, this will shape what people take away
- Early on summarize results, approach, and why it's important
- Consider your audience
- No long literature reviews
- Don't be defensive
- Know the time
- Back up the presentation
- Jesse Shapiro has presentation tips

Flyout miscellaneous

- Have some idea of what's happening in the real world
- Expect random questions, weird people
- Know fun facts about your research
- Be prepared for schedule changes
- Be climate and illness ready
- Know your drinking limit
- Travel light and smart
- Send thank yous

Offers

- These may be slow to come for institutional reasons
- Usually includes salary, research support, teaching requirements, moving budget, campus visit
- Negotiate once you have an offer
 - Non-salary components are easier (e.g. teaching or start-up budget)
 - Be courteous, if you have multiple offers drop ones you would never take
- Don't rush to say yes to early offers, you have large option values to waiting

General advice

- Don't get flustered
 - People ask strange things
 - Weird things happen
- Sell yourself and your field as an asset to the department
 - Complementarities with other fields?
 - What can you teach?
- Don't be controversial
- A good/bad interview (from your perspective) means nothing about you
- Always get dessert

Recap

- JMP
 - Read advice from Goldin and Katz
- Interviews
 - 2 and 5-10 minute summaries
 - Other current and future research
- Job market talk
 - Read advice from Shapiro
- Be organized, pay attention to details
- Be friendly/enthusiastic, show you can be a good colleague
- The process can be (sort of) fun if you're prepared

AAEA – Another Booming Market for Ag-Related Students

July 30-Aug 1, 2017

- Fields: Agribusiness, food, ag-environ, extension, postdoc
- More and more postings
- Format:
 - More informal – 1-2 interviewers
 - Typically 30 minutes
 - You only need to submit CV on AAEA Job Board
 - Some schools have a set of questions that they ask everyone
 - You may even get another interview through meeting w someone at the reception
- Flyouts: Nov, schools try to scoup the good candidates before they go to ASSA

International Students Who Want a US Academic Position

- Expect more judgment and skepticism especially for non-native speakers, especially from Asia
- While at graduate schools, try your best to improve your oral and written English
 - Take a writing class
 - Get a professional editor for your dissertation
 - Watch CNN, not sitcoms
- Network at conferences, break the introvert stereotype
- Ask questions at seminars – at first, all questions are stupid
- Get a good teaching evaluation
- It is your responsibility to convince people to hire you!

International Students & Students Interested in the International Academia – HK, China etc.

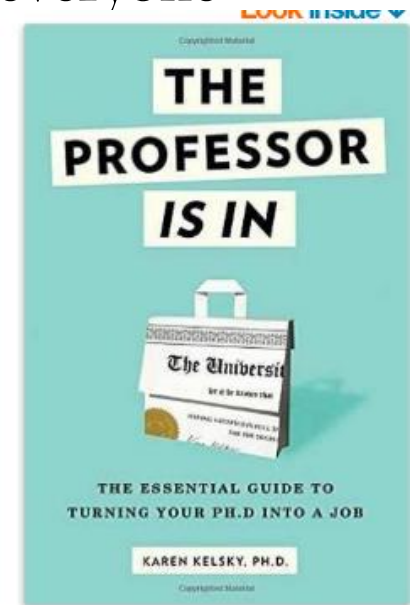
- Your interviewers may still suffer jet lag so it is your responsibility to light them up
- Don't feel bad if you did not do well, Chinese schools like to judge based on resumes and advisor names
- Rising standards of recruiting and tenure for Chinese market
- Occasionally the interviewers speak Chinese
- Be sure to apply to your alma mater
- You may not have to do flyouts to get an offer

Lessons Learnt from the job market - Wendong

- Enjoy the spotlight on you and your research
 - Very rare
- Relax, network – you will find lifelong colleagues, friends from other candidates, and the interviewers
- Practice, practice, and practice
 - Job talks
 - I did five times: fellow candidates, 2nd year with fresh econometric knowledge, advisor, committee, your family etc.
 - Anticipate every question and try to come up w a good answer
 - Mock interviews!

Some additional resources (Cy Box folders – will be shared by Dr. Schroeter)

- Sample interview questions
- General econ job market tips and discussions on the process
- Writing tips for papers and dissertations
- Sample spreadsheet for you organize job applications and reference letters
- All these are in the folder that will be shared with everyone



Activate NCFDD institutional sub account

<http://www.facultydiversity.org/default.asp?page=JobMarketVideo>