


Tips for Preparing for the Job Market¹

Iowa State University

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¹Disclaimer: These represent our opinions only. Talk to other people too. 

Before You Go on the Market

- ▶ Questions you need to answer:
 1. What ARE you? \implies # of jobs, # of competitors
 2. Where do you want to go? Where do you not want to go?
 3. Are you willing to take a postdoc? Move abroad?
 4. Are you ready for the market?
- ▶ Read [The Guide and Advice for Junior Economists on the Job Market](#).

Timeline: Overview

- ▶ 3rd years:
 - ▶ **Third year paper**
 - ▶ What is going to be your job market paper?
 - ▶ Will you have additional papers? Will you have a publication?
 - ▶ Good time to consider your career interests. Sign up to extra preparation (e.g., PFF).
- ▶ 4th year:
 - ▶ **Oral exam**
 - ▶ Why is THIS a good job market paper?
 - ▶ In which areas are you an “expert”? e.g., literature, methodology, teaching
- ▶ 5th year:
 - ▶ **Job Market**
 - ▶ You can't change facts at this point
 - ▶ A test of how well you answered these questions
 - ▶ Also, how you package your answers

Job Market Year Timeline

- ▶ Early Summer
 - ▶ Get serious about your job market paper, this does not mean start it now
 - ▶ Finalize CV, research/teaching statements, website
 - ▶ All Misc. Time Sinks Completed
 - ▶ Have sense of final steps for completed JMP, confirm letter writers (3 research + teaching)
- ▶ Late Summer/Early Fall
 - ▶ Get your JMP in very good form, schedule practice job talk.
 - ▶ Make hotel/plane reservations (check exact date).
 - ▶ Give completed JMP to advisors.
- ▶ Sept-Dec: Check *Job Openings for Economists*, Economics Job Market, APPAM, Chronicle Vitae, HigherED Jobs.
 - ▶ Talk with advisors about where to apply.
- ▶ Early Sept/Oct: Finalize job market packet.
- ▶ Mid-Nov (as early as Sept): Send packet to job listings.
- ▶ Dec: Schedule mock interviews.

Job Market Year Timeline: Applied Econ Students

Same as before BUT have preliminary job market packet ready by early August

- ▶ Many universities conduct preliminary interviews at AAEEAs
- ▶ Check AAEEA job board starting in June
- ▶ Plan to attend AAEEAs regardless to network and socialize

General Tips

- ▶ **Your market begins well before your fifth year**
- ▶ Take advantage of any/all networking opportunities
 - ▶ Conferences
 - ▶ Don't just sit in your room
 - ▶ Visiting speakers
 - ▶ Summer schools
- ▶ Your reputation will precede you
 - ▶ Hopefully in a good way
- ▶ Every interaction influences job prospects

Role of Advisors/Placement Director

- ▶ Provide feedback on job market paper and presentation
- ▶ Provide information on openings and interest from employers
- ▶ Contact potential employers about students on the market
- ▶ Mock interviews
 - ▶ 10 minutes on job market paper (1-2 summary at start), 5 minutes on other stuff
 - ▶ know what you want to teach at each kind of school
 - ▶ answer to “What will you work on next?”
- ▶ Keep advisors in loop on interviews, flyouts, offers.

Role of Graduate Coordinator

- ▶ This is **Amy Emmett at ISU**
- ▶ The coordinator's can help manage letters of recommendation and other materials
- ▶ This usually means uploading them as proxy for faculty letter writers
 - ▶ your job to give letter writers and the coordinator enough time (Nov. 15th deadline does not mean you tell her Nov 10th to send your letters in)
 - ▶ your job to verify letters have been submitted
- ▶ Both [JOE](#) and [econjobmarket.org](#) and a few other sites this part is easy.
- ▶ You will have to check individual websites to make sure that faculty or proxy have uploaded letters.
- ▶ ISU has a Communication Specialist, Deb Gruca, who will manage the official Job Candidate's website.

- ▶ Job market paper is extremely important, very little (nothing?) can make up for a weak one.
 - ▶ May want to include a second paper, check with advisor. Do this if possible.
- ▶ The abstract and introduction are the most read parts, write and rewrite and rewrite.
 - ▶ Goal is to appropriately appeal to many economists.
 - ▶ Ask many people to read your abstract and intro.
- ▶ Consider the title carefully.
- ▶ Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz have good writing [tips](#), read and use them.
- ▶ A job market paper is not the same as a publication, it should demonstrate all (as much) of what you know.

Job Market Paper - The Final push

- ▶ A high quality job market paper is crucial! Furthermore, it will only achieve its potential if it is well polished.
- ▶ The next couple of months are a very important period to make a last push on any substantial changes on your JMP.
 - ▶ You should aim to have a good draft by **late June** and circulate it to your advisor, colleagues and anyone who might be helping you on improving its message.
 - ▶ After that you will spend the following months polishing and improving the paper to get the version you will send with your job applications.
 - ▶ Do not underestimate the time necessary to get the JMP in good shape.
 - ▶ Consider taking it to the Graduate College [writing center](#).
- ▶ Plan to spend the Summer in Ames. This is a very important period of your career in Grad School. You can take a vacation after you secure a job.

Finding Job Postings

- ▶ Types of jobs: research, teaching, private/public sectors.
- ▶ Jobs continuously posted on [JOE](#), [econjobmarket.org](#) and [AAEA Job Board](#)
 - ▶ Record all listings you are interested in - be careful to accurately record everything (due date, email addresses, physical addresses)
- ▶ There may be other sources for jobs in your field (e.g. business, public policy, education)
- ▶ Have rough ranking of schools (talk to advisor)
- ▶ Keep a list of schools that you are NOT applying to or are unsure about due to quality
- ▶ May receive solicitations for applications, but probably not

Preparing Applications

1. CV
2. Research statement/dissertation abstract
3. Teaching statement/evaluations
4. Cover letter templates
 - ▶ different for research, teaching, private/public sectors
 - ▶ customize for idiosyncratic reasons (location preference, LAC, international)
 - ▶ DO NOT LIE
5. Let letter writers know early (Aug/Sept)
6. Personal website is required! No matter what types of jobs you are focusing on. (E.g. [Katherine Lacy's website](#))
7. Transcripts (both undergrad and grad, sometimes official)
8. Examples of course syllabi (optional)
9. Professional Photo (Ask Deb Gruca)
10. Keep all of this in an organized folder in PDFs, you never know when you will need what

- ▶ **Be organized.**
- ▶ Be able to manipulate all potential documents.
- ▶ Use an Excel file:
 - ▶ check addresses, emails, etc., very carefully.
 - ▶ online application (?), send letters electronically (?)
- ▶ Are there details about schools that you could include in cover letters? Don't get too carried away.
- ▶ Expect to spend a full month writing cover letters, filling out applications: you will not get much else done.
- ▶ Make sure letters of recommendation are being submitted by your writers or Graduate Coordinator.
- ▶ Send out lots of applications (MC VERY low relative to MB)

For those who are Planning ahead (2nd, 3rd and 4th year)

- ▶ Start preparing your portfolio early.
- ▶ Participate on Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program.
- ▶ Present at Conferences, get to meet people.
- ▶ Practice presenting/communicating your work.
- ▶ Go to Summer Workshops.
- ▶ Offer to teach a class as instructors.

Finally (for now...)

- ▶ Let me know if you have any questions.
- ▶ This process can be (sort of) fun.

Everything works out in the end. If it hasn't worked out yet, then it's not the end.

- ▶ Job Openings for Economists (AEA)
- ▶ econjobmarket.org, interfolio.com, academicjobsonline.org
- ▶ Harvard's job market information
- ▶ Jesse Shapiro's "How to Give an Applied Micro Talk"
- ▶ Love the Market.
- ▶ John Cawley has a nice overview
- ▶ General job market, writing and interview tips