



# THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET

AN INTRO FOR EVERYONE

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# THE JOB MARKET WILL SCARE YOU

- This is totally and 1000% normal.
- Harness the fear and use it to fuel your work.
  
- It's good to keep an eye on the industry, too.
  
- **The academic job market is 90% things completely 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)
- **And 10% things in your control:**
  - Your record: research, teaching, CV
  - Your job materials (more on this soon)
  - Your reference letters (sort of)
  - Your branding, reputation, network in the field
- **So just concern yourself 1000% with this last 10%.**

# TIMELINE: THE TENURE TRACK MARKET

- Varies by field and by country

July–	TT job postings begin
Oct–Jan	Apps due
Nov–Jan	Long list interviews (~25-40 people) (usually via Skype, or at a national conference)
Jan–Feb	Short list campus interviews (~4-6 people)
Feb–Apr	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
Nov–Feb	Interviews for Round 1 applications
Dec–Apr	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	Job begins

- The interview and selection process for these jobs tend to be condensed versions of the primary TT market, but your qualifications have to be just as good.

# THE REAL TIMELINE

- 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, get things in motion for publishing.
- 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).  
Get at least a chapter of the dissertation in motion.  
Teach at least one class as primary instructor of record.
- YEAR 4** **“Practice” job market year.**  
Apply for dissertation year fellowships.  
Be very visible.
- YEAR 5** **“Real” job market year.**

# TIME COMMITMENT FOR THE MARKET

- **DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE** the time it takes to go on the job market.
- The first time you write your materials, it's not unusual for the process to take many months. Start early.
- It does get easier, and your materials will improve.
- Hence why it's recommended that you do a "practice year" on the job market, when the stakes aren't as high.

# ELEMENTS OF A JOB APPLICATION

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

## Other materials

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

# COVER LETTER

- A 2-page summary in business letter format that outlines:
  - Your research program and future
  - Your teaching philosophy, background, and future
  - Why you want the job.
- It's okay if this repeats what's in the research and teaching statements. It should be a shorter, condensed version of those.
- Please do use official letterhead, which you can download from UCM:  
<http://images.ucmerced.edu/>
- The cover letter should absolutely not be longer than 2 pages.
  - Think of the search committee who have to sort through hundreds if not thousands of applications.
  - You *will* annoy them if you send a letter longer than 2 pages.

# 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.)

# CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

- Resist the urge to pad your CV!
  - E.g., usually campus-internal talks (e.g., like at CIS brown bags) aren't listed.
  - Too much white space is also a dead giveaway. Use just enough to make it readable.

# 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?
    - The answer is "yes" to all basic courses.
    - Pitch at least one "sexy" course for undergrads, which will help build the major, etc.
    - Pitch at least one serious, "sexy" course for grads, if there's a grad program. Think related but slightly beyond your dissertation.
- **Teaching portfolio also includes:**
  - Teaching evaluations (not just cherry-picked ones)
  - Sample syllabuses
  - Teaching-specific reference letter, if your other ref letters cannot address your teaching.

# WORK SAMPLES

- 2–5 representative publications
  - If you're still a student, one of these *must, must, must* be a polished dissertation chapter (not the lit review or intro) + abstract for your whole dissertation.
  - 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**
  - Typically, in your first couple rounds on the market, your Ph.D. committee
  - AND an external member who is outside your Ph.D. institution.
    - E.g., a collaborator; external member of your committee;
    - Someone you’ve had extended research contact with.
    - Best if: from a good institution, is at least senior-ish, doesn’t have too many competing students on the market.
  
- **Stay on your letter writers’ good sides**
  - 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.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Deadline	School/Department	Position	Directions	Link to job ad	Description	Letter writers
2	2 December 2013	University of California, Merced / Cognitive and Information Sciences program	Assistant Professor in Computational Linguistics (see description for specifics)	Submit online via online system.	<a href="http://linguistlist.org/jobs/get-jo">http://linguistlist.org/jobs/get-jo</a>	The University of California, Merced has one Computational Linguistics position open at the Assistant Professor (tenure-track) level in the area of Cognitive and Information Sciences. Preference will be given to applicants whose doctorate is in linguistics or a closely related field and whose research program makes use of quantitative linguistics methods. Especially desirable are individuals with expertise in one or more of the following areas: computational phonetics/phonology, quantitative cognitive linguistics, corpus-based approaches to linguistic analysis, statistical natural language processing, and comparative or typological methods. The successful candidate will develop and teach new undergraduate and graduate courses in the Cognitive and Information Sciences program and round out its emphasis in language. The successful candidate is expected to actively pursue extramural funding, participate in program building, and mentor students from diverse groups.	[redacted names]
3	8 December 2013	xxx	Assistant Professor – Computational Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, and Language Variation and Change	Submit online via online system.	xxx	xxx	xxx

# AFTER THE DOSSIER

- **Next:**
  - long list interviews: usually 20–30 minute interviews via skype or at a conference, with the search committee
  - and then short list interviews: 1–2 day campus visits, with interviews with deans, faculty, and students; job talk(s); sometimes sample class teaching.
  - and then negotiations.
- **OR interminable silence.**
  - In this silence, the Academic Jobs Wiki is either your friend or your obsession:
  - [http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Academic\\_Jobs\\_Wiki](http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Academic_Jobs_Wiki)
- **Jobs sometimes don't send rejection letters, so don't expect to be kept up to date on search progress.**
- **All job search processes are very idiosyncractic.**
  - They depend on the school, on the search committee, etc.
  - Be flexible, and don't take it personally.

# 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?
  - Stalk 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?
  - Mine all of your faculty mentors for a faculty perspective: What do they know from their experience on hiring committees? What do they know from their colleagues at other unis?
  - Bug all of your recently-hired colleagues for their job market materials as examples.
  - Stalk the departments that are hiring. What are the focuses? What do the faculty work on? Where are the gaps? Where might you fit in?
- **Don't attempt the market without doing your research! After all, you're trained as researchers, so leverage those skills.**

# 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.

# APPROACH THE MARKET LIKE A RESEARCHER

- 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.

# APPROACH THE MARKET LIKE A RESEARCHER

- When it comes to interviews and job talks:
  - Practice, practice, practice, practice, practice.
  - Do your homework and know the department inside out. Be able to think critically about the department/school, beyond what the website tells you.

# WHERE TO FIND JOB POSTINGS

- Disciplinary-specific websites
- Chronicle of Higher Education
- The grapevine
  
- For postdocs:
  - Fellowships:
    - Big granting agencies: NIH, NSF, ACLS, AAUW, etc.
    - Advertised as jobs: e.g., Mellons, etc.
  - Cultivating relationships with external mentors.
  - Nudging your faculty mentors to work their networks (though this is becoming increasingly difficult in changing hiring climates).

# 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

# A FEW LAST WORDS

- **For the sake of your sanity, stay as positive as you can on the market.**
- Remember, it's ultimately not a race to the finish but a marathon that extends the whole of your career. So be nice to the people who are on the job market with you.
- **Keep an eye on the industry, too.**
  - Be clear with yourself about what you're willing to go through on the academic job market. How long? Where geographically? What kinds of departments?
  - It's never good to be desperate, so if it's a game you want to fight as hard as you can for but won't be devastated by losing, you'll do much better in terms of sanity and confidence.