

The Academic Job Search for International Graduate Students

Note: Some of this information may not apply to your particular discipline.

I. During Your Graduate Degree – Productivity matters

- Build teaching and publishing experience as soon as possible. Think seriously about publishing.
- Attend professional association meetings and professional conferences. Present at a session or chair a session. Actively make faculty contacts.
- Advisor is key for authoring articles.
- Talk to your advisor. If your advisor is not in a position to assist you, you may want to talk to other faculty who are supportive.
- Your advisor usually writes recommendation letters for you.

II. Starting your Search – Do it early

- Be prepared for an arduous search. Doing a good homework takes time.
 - Put together a detailed position search advertisement including deciding on where to apply, getting letters of recommendation, writing an attractive CV and cover letter, putting together an excellent one hour talk, and building a network of faculty contacts.
- Meet and stay in contact with faculty from other institutions.

III. CV – A strong CV is vital

- Put your most attractive asset at the head of your curriculum vitae.
- Your CV should be crisp, to the point and your strengths should be highlighted as they apply to the position.
- Faculty look at area of expertise (thesis) and university you are from.
- Put the names of faculty who are writing recommendation letters for you in the CV.
- Other faculty will notice if a friend of theirs recommends you.
- Search Committee look for your potential for the next five years.
- If you have been a PI, this is important. Your research and publishing should be highlighted.
- In some fields collaborations with industry are very important.
- Make sure that your cover letter is addressed to the right person.
- If you have attended a grant writing course this is worth including.

IV. The Interview

- Phone interview – Search Committee is looking for English skills and clarity of expression for teaching among other things.
- Before the campus interview, usually the Search Committee has talked to everyone so your qualifications have been thoroughly checked out already.
- If you have made it to the finalist for the campus interview, you are as good as anyone else who is interviewing.
- In the interview, faculty are looking for creative thinking, interesting research, the ability to get funding (so put grant writing experience on your CV) and your potential for the department as a colleague, researcher, and teacher.

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- Frequently interviews consist of a day-long program (sometimes two and a half). You will often give a one-hour talk and then have half hour meetings with faculty (including Dean, Chair, etc.). For each meeting with a faculty member, remember that they are new to you. Try to behave as though it were your first meeting of the day.

V. The Talk – This could be the game changer

- You need to have an EXCELLENT talk.
- Practice makes perfect. Rehearse in front of your advisor and other peers, if possible. Get feedback and practice again.

VI. Individual Faculty Interviews

- You need to be able to describe what courses you would be able to teach.
- What grant proposals do you intend to write and where would you send them? They will also be looking to see if you will fit in that particular academic environment.

VII. Initial offer was made, now what

- Thank the offer and receive the initial offer in letter. Take your time and read each item carefully. Do not accept the offer immediately. Think about some negotiable items (e.g., salary, start-up fund, equipment, lab space, first-year release, summer support, travel funds, course buy-out option, etc.).
- Talk to your advisor about the negotiation if you feel comfortable with.
- Ask for the department to financially support the immigration-related application (H-1B, permanent residency application, etc.). Have it written on your contract if the department is paying for you.

VIII. General Tips

- Do not mention about salary or start-up funds when you interview.
- All jobs are interesting. Simultaneously apply everywhere. Depending on the position, there are 200-300 applications.
- Do volunteer research/teaching if there are opportunities.
- Select your job opportunity based on your talents. If you are not a creative thinker or research oriented then look elsewhere.
- Do not mention your visa status on your materials (CV). Consult with your International Advisor and make sure you understand your current visa status. If you understand what you need to do in order to be eligible for employment, you can reassure your potential employer about your ability to coordinate the process. Many large universities have an office which will assist you.

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