

FINDING YOUR FIRST TEACHING POSITION IN ACADEME

In today's competitive job market, having a master's degree or Ph.D. does not guarantee employment. In fact, because of the increase in the number of individuals graduating with similar credentials, the competition for jobs is greater than ever. That is why it is so critical for you to be prepared for what you are about to begin...the academic job search.

The purpose of this handout is to assist you with the search process from beginning to end. The following information will be discussed:

- Assessing your abilities and interests
- Researching your discipline
- Gathering the necessary credentials
- Preparing a curriculum vitae
- Identifying opportunities
- Preparing for the interview

KNOW YOURSELF

Before you begin the actual job search, it is important to think about your:

- Professional skills
- Academic interests
- Personal values
- Professional goals

What are your areas of strength? At what level do you want to teach? Where do you want to teach? Do you want to teach in a large, urban setting or a small, private, Catholic institution in the suburbs? Would you like to teach at a community college or a 4-year college? Is tenure a goal? These are just a few of the questions you should be able to answer before you send out your first application. Additionally, you want to give some consideration to your ability to commit (physically, psychologically, and financially) to the job search. It takes a great deal of time, energy, and money to conduct a job search effectively. It has often been stated that looking for a job is a full-time job in and of itself. However, going into it with the right attitude, the necessary materials, and realistic goals and expectations will make it a positive experience.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:

In considering the cost of the typical job search, take into account the following expenses:

- Curriculum vitae (c.v.) typing and printing
- Portfolio (supporting materials such as published articles, chapters and/or conference presentations, artwork, audio-visual tapes, scores, writing samples)
- Postage (mailing c.v.'s, portfolios, follow-up letters)
- Credential file/dossier
- Official transcripts
- Telephone expenses
- Interviewing (travel, wardrobe, conference registration fees, lodging and food)
- Miscellaneous (stationery, envelopes, copying, printing)*

*Finding a Job in Your Field: A Handbook for PhD's and MA's, pp. 2-3

KNOW YOUR FIELD

Once you have determined what you want, and where you want to be, but before you begin applying for positions, it's time to begin researching your discipline. Investigate recent and past hiring trends. Learn about starting salaries, application procedures and the interviewing process. Keep in mind that the academic job search is timed to the academic year. The selection process for many positions may begin as early as the Fall prior to your graduation. Make inquiries into the appropriate format for a curriculum vitae within your field of study.

How can you acquire so much information? There are several ways:

1. **Faculty** - Try to establish a mentor relationship with a faculty member. Advisers and dissertation chairs are two obvious options that immediately come to mind. Not only can faculty provide support throughout the process, but they can also provide valuable insights.
2. **Peers/Alumni** - Find out what your fellow classmates and students ahead of you in the program are doing. Try to talk with alumni who are currently employed, and have recently completed a job search. They may be able to provide advice to assist you in your efforts.
3. **Professional Publications** - The Chronicle of Higher Education is the primary source for listings of academic positions, both faculty and administrative. Professional journals and newsletters not only list full-time positions, but also include articles highlighting trends, updates, current research topics, etc.
4. **Professional Associations** - Many organizations publish periodicals specific to your discipline. They may include job listings and/or articles related to your career interests.
5. **Conferences/Conventions** - This is an opportunity to meet prospective colleagues and provide a forum in which to keep informed of current issues within your discipline. Many conferences have job interviewing services available as well.
6. **CUA's Career Services Office** - Maintains professional job listings and houses directories providing descriptions of colleges and universities nationwide as well as some international institutions.
7. **Professional Activity** - An excellent way to learn more about your discipline is to become actively involved in professional activities. Through this involvement, you not only enhance your knowledge, but you will also be viewed by others as an active, committed professional. Publish and/or present research at professional meetings. If finances permit, attend summer symposia and special training sponsored by organizations related to your discipline.
8. **Campus Committees** - If given the opportunity, get involved in on-campus graduate student committees (departmental or university curriculum, administrative and/or advisory committees).

GATHERING CREDENTIALS

After you have established your goals and priorities and researched your discipline, the next step is to create a file that supports and documents your credentials. Gathering this material in advance will make the job search much more organized, and ultimately more effective.

One of the most critical components of your application is your c.v. This document will serve as your introduction to a potential employer, so it is imperative that it be an accurate, concise yet comprehensive, representation of your qualifications and interests.

Another supporting component of your application is the credential file, also known as a dossier. The dossier may include letters of recommendation, transcript(s), a writing sample, certificates of achievement, or any other relevant, supporting materials.

When deciding who should write a letter of recommendation for you, consider those who are most familiar with your academic background, work experiences and career interests. They may be faculty and/or employers. Select those who can write about you in the most specific terms. For example, it

would be preferable to have a junior faculty member write specifically about your accomplishments than to have a senior faculty member who doesn't know you well and would write more generally.

It may be to your advantage to spend some time discussing your specific career interests and goals with these individuals prior to their writing your letters of recommendation. This will enable them to address your qualifications more specifically as they relate to the types of positions for which you will be applying. Credential File Services are provided by Interfolio (www.interfolio.com). For more information, contact the Career Services Office.

PREPARING YOUR CURRICULUM VITAE

As mentioned previously, the c.v. is a critical element of the job search. It should be a complete summary of your educational and professional experience as it relates to the types of positions for which you will be applying. Keep in mind, however, that every discipline has specific c.v. format requirements. To find out the appropriate format within your field of study, consult with several faculty members in your academic department.

Before you begin writing your c.v., think about what you want to communicate about yourself to potential employers. Consider your educational background, your interests and skills, and your aspirations. This will assist you in not only identifying organizations and positions of interest, but also in tailoring your c.v. to specific job leads.

SUGESTED GUIDELINES WHEN ORGANIZING YOUR C.V.

All information on your c.v. should be relevant to the type(s) of positions to which you will be applying. Depending on your background and experience, several pages may be necessary depict your credentials accurately and completely. Generally speaking, c.v.'s are typically 2 pages, 3 pages at most. However, some disciplines may require a more detailed c.v., which may range from 4-12 pages. One thought to keep in mind...Quality Before Quantity!

Below is a sampling of the many categories from which you can choose. Their order will depend on their degree of importance as they relate to specific positions. In fact, you may have more than one version of your c.v., each highlighting a particular interest or type of institution. For example, you may have one c.v. targeted for community colleges, and one for a larger, 4-year+ university. Your community college c.v. may be more focused on teaching interests and skills, since that would be more appealing to that type of institution. On the other hand, you may have a c.v. for a larger, 4-year+ university that highlights research interests and other related activities. Rule of Thumb: Keep your audience in mind when organizing the content of your c.v.

CATEGORIES APPROPRIATE FOR THE VITA

Academic Preparation	Educational Background	Leadership & Activities Academic	Teaching Experience	Special Training References
Teaching Overview	Research Overview	Awards Course Highlights	College Activities	Articles/Monographs
Academic Service	Faculty Leadership	Special Honors	Publications	Workshop Presentations
Teaching Interests	Professional Interests	Proficiencies	Background	Graduate Practica
Thesis	Dissertation Title	Academic Accomplishments	Language Competencies	Endorsements
Academic Training	Educational Overview	Foreign Study	Scholarly Publications	Recommendations
Experience Summary	Administrative Experience	Professional Experience	Professional Certification	Reviews
Professional Service	Committee Leadership	Distinctions	Dossier	Workshops and Conventions

Academic Interests	Professional Studies	Areas of Knowledge	Scholarly Works	Exhibits/Exhibitions
Research Interests	Consulting Experience	Professional Achievements	Scholarly Presentations	Programs and Workshops
Academic Background	Departmental Leadership	Study Abroad	Internships	Arrangements/Scores
Experience Highlights	Scholarships	Professional Overview	Certificates	Conferences Attended
University Involvement	Professional Competencies	Honors and Awards	Credentials	Conference Participation
Research Interests	Degrees	Areas of Expertise	Books	Conference Leadership
Comprehensive Areas	Continuing Education Exp.	Career Achievements	Conference Presentations	
Education	Professional Association	Travel Abroad	Teaching/Research/Ass'tships Licensure	
Research Experience	Fellowships	Professional Background	Placement File	
Service	Educational Highlights	Prizes	Professional Papers	
Educational Interests	Principal Teachers	Career Highlights	Conventions Addresses	
Dissertation	Related Experience	Languages	Graduate Fieldwork	

(Finding a Job in Your Field, p.23)

There are generally 3 basic sections to a c.v.: **identification, education, and professional experience.**

Identification includes your name, address and phone number. Some individuals elect to include their e-mail address, office address and phone number as well. If you include this, be sure to clearly identify them as such. Personal information, such as age, gender, race and religious affiliation should not be included on your c.v. Not only is it inappropriate, but, in most cases it is illegal for employers to ask you about this information. However, as part of the application process, you may receive a form from the INSIGHT Into Diversity (www.InsightIntoDiversity.com) to be completed, confidentially, and it will not be included in your application materials.

Education includes degrees completed as well as those in progress. Be sure to include the name and location of the institution, major field of study, anticipated graduation date, and dissertation title and an abstract -- in reverse chronological order. You may also include academic honors, awards and scholarships in this section.

Professional Experience is a rather broad category. You want to list any experience (paid or unpaid) that relates to the positions to which you will be applying. For example, if you're applying for a position that is primarily research focused, you would begin by listing research experience and/or interests. Perhaps you would then list any publications and/or presentations. This may be work you've completed as a professional in the field or as a graduate assistant or fellow. The key question to ask yourself is...Is it relevant? The degree of relevancy will determine where it is located within your c.v. The most important, most relevant information should be positioned towards the beginning of the document.

On the other hand, if you're applying for a position that is primarily teaching focused, you would begin by listing teaching experience. Again, this may be work you've completed as a professional and/or work you've completed as a graduate assistant or teaching fellow.

Other information to include may be memberships/affiliations, volunteer experience, special/additional training, languages, and perhaps a statement regarding your dossier .

SAMPLE CONTENT FOR A C.V.

	NAME
Home Address & Telephone Number	Office Address & Telephone Number

EDUCATION:

- List degrees including years awarded (put most advanced degree first and continue in reverse chronological order), institutions, major fields of study and dissertation topic with a brief synopsis.

HONORS:

- List academic honors, awards and scholarships.

TEACHING EXPERIENCES:

- List dates, institutions and courses taught; provide two or three sentences describing what you did.

TEACHING INTERESTS:

- List subjects you have taught and/or wish to teach.

RELATED EXPERIENCES:

- List related professional employment experiences; provide two or three sentences describing what you did.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- List subjects you are researching and/or wish to research.

PUBLICATIONS:

- List published work (books, journal articles, etc.) and dates; use standard citation style for your discipline.

MEMBERSHIPS:

- List professional associations to which you belong and indicate offices held (if applicable).

SERVICE:

- List related volunteer experience including academic committees.

REFERENCES:

- List faculty members/employers who can address your background and qualifications.
(Taken, with permission, from The University of Maryland Placement Manual, 1993)

DISCOVERING JOB OPPORTUNITIES

As you begin applying for positions, reference the steps you have completed so far to identify the positions that best fit with your goals. While it is important to remain aware of your needs, remember that if you restrict your search too much, you may limit your opportunities.

Advertised Openings

Some of the most obvious ways to find advertised positions are: professional association publications; journals and periodicals (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Affirmative Action Register*, etc.); Career Services full-time job listings; conferences and conventions; and departmental bulletin boards.

Unadvertised Openings

Networking

Networking is an important way to make yourself visible to potential employers. This proactive approach will help employers recognize you, your abilities and your interests. While you should begin to develop your network as an undergraduate, start reaching out as early in your graduate school career as you can--the effort is extremely beneficial. Below is a list of possible networking contacts:

Conferences

Depending on the size and scope of the association, you will have the chance to talk with professionals from all over the country and perhaps abroad. As the opportunity arises, don't be afraid to initiate conversations in which you could discuss your career and research interests, your career goals, along with their careers and current work. Gather as much information as you can about their institutions, positions, and departments. This is referred to as informational interviewing. For more information refer to the "Learning About Careers From Others: The Informational Interview" handout in Career Services.

Alumni

CUA Alumni are an outstanding resource for networking. Many are eager to share their experiences and expertise, and expanding your network to include alumni in your discipline is a savvy way to identify opportunities for informational interviews and hidden jobs.

Faculty

Faculty members are an often overlooked professional network. Faculty often become aware of opportunities before they are published, and they can assist you with securing informational interviews. Even if the initial contact does not yield a job offer, these referrals will help you polish your interview skills and could lead to potential employment.

Reviewing Job Listings

When reviewing job listings, decide if you would be interested in the position by considering the responsibilities and duties of the position, required vs. preferred qualifications, term of appointment, and salary. Pay particular attention to the application procedures and deadlines, and be sure to follow the application procedures exactly—an oversight could result in the employer refusing to consider your application.

Follow-Through on Applications

The importance of adequate follow-through cannot be overstated. It is appropriate and recommended that you call the institution to check on the receipt of your application materials if no acknowledgement has been received. It is also appropriate to ask about the time frame for hiring, if not already provided.

THE INTERVIEW

One of the most rewarding moments in a job search is an invitation to interview for a position. Since this can also be a very stressful moment, thorough preparation is key. Knowing what to expect and preparing appropriately will increase the likelihood that you will perform at your peak in the interview.

Understanding the Selection Process

The Screening Interview

Typically, a selection committee, consisting of the department head, faculty, administrators, and students, narrows down the pool of candidates. They may conduct screening interviews, often over the phone, to evaluate a candidate's degree of interest and qualifications for the position. After screening all applicants, the committee identifies those they would like to invite to campus for a selection interview.

The On-Site Interview

If you successfully complete the screening interview, find out what the on-campus interview will involve. Will you meet with the committee as a group or with each member individually? Who will make the arrangements for the day? Should you plan to stay overnight? If it's long distance, who will handle the travel and lodging accommodations? What will the itinerary for the day be? How will travel expenses be

handled? These are just some of the questions you want to consider, especially if you're traveling out of town for the interview. By taking care of logistical arrangements early on, you can begin focusing on the content of the interview.

It is not uncommon for an on-campus interview to last an entire day, including 1-2 meals and perhaps an informal social gathering. **The informal nature of the social gathering, however, is still part of the interview process, and should be treated as such.** In a more formal vein, you may be asked to present your research to faculty members and/or students. You may also be asked to teach a class.

Professional Image

Dress appropriately for the institution with which you are interviewing. A conservative or business-look is best for most interviews -- a suit and tie for men and a suit or classic, tailored dress for women. Convey an image of professionalism and confidence.

Preparation

Prepare to discuss your credentials thoroughly. Be able to answer interview questions typical of your discipline. Talk with your faculty, alumni and fellow classmates for insight into the kinds of questions to expect. The more you know about the interview process within your discipline, the better you can prepare yourself. One final tip would be to practice, practice, practice...Have classmates or a faculty member conduct practice interviews with you or contact the Career Services Office to schedule a mock interview?

Research the institution and the faculty within the department. This information can be obtained from college catalogs, and Peterson's Annual Guides to Graduate and Undergraduate Study. Additionally, you may want to research junior faculty dissertation abstracts. Not only will this information make you feel more knowledgeable and confident, but, it will also provide you with conversational material throughout the interview process, as well as with background information when asking questions.

Follow-Up

At the conclusion of the interview, be sure to thank the selection committee members for their time and consideration. Reaffirm your interest in the position. It is also appropriate to ask about the next step in the hiring process (e.g. when they anticipate making a final decision). If by the end of the day you are absolutely certain that you are no longer interested in the position, polite protocol would suggest that you wait until at least the next day to inform them of your decision to be removed from the candidate pool, either in writing or over the phone.

Another helpful hint is to follow up with a thank you note to the head of the selection committee, expressing your thanks to each of the individuals with whom you met, and again reaffirming your interest. As mentioned previously, if you no longer wish to be considered for the position this, too, would be an appropriate time to let them know of your decision.

The information contained in this handout was compiled from the following resources found in the Career Services Office:

The Academic Job Search Handbook, 3rd Ed. Heiberger, Mary Morris, and Julia Miller Vick. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career: A Portable Mentor for Scholars from Graduate School through Tenure. Goldsmith, John, Komlos, John and Gold, Penny. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

The Curriculum Vitae Handbook: Using your CV to Present and Promote Your Academic Career. Anthony, R., and Gerald Roe. Iowa City, Iowa: Rudi Publishing, 1994.

How to Prepare your Curriculum Vitae. Jackson, Acy L. Illinois: NTC Publishing Group, 1993

Cracking the Academic Nut. Newhouse, Margaret. Cambridge, Mass. Office of Career Services, Harvard University, 1997.

Additional resources found in the Career Services Office to assist you in your job search efforts include:

Publications:

"The Chronicle of Higher Education" (published weekly)

National Trade and Professional Associations of the United States

Peterson's Guide to 4-year Colleges

Peterson's Guides to Graduate & Professional Programs

Peterson's Guide to Two Year Colleges

Services:

- Credential File Service (A file established for your letters of recommendation, undergraduate and/or graduate transcripts and other appropriate, supporting documents; fee-based service provided by Interfolio (www.interfolio.com)).

- Full-time Job Listings (Existing opportunities received by our office on a daily basis)

- Individual Job Search Appointments (Talk about your specific job search needs with a staff member)

- Sample C.V.'s & Resumes

- Handouts on Informational Interviewing, Resume/Letter Writing, Interviewing, Networking

For more information, stop by or call:

Career Services

102 McMahan Hall • (202) 319-5623

Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm