

NABS Grad Student Workshop 2002
Applying and Interviewing for Jobs
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Where To Start?

Do some brainstorming:

- Make a list of potential jobs you'd be interested in.
- Think about whether you want to emphasize teaching, research, or both.
- Decide what parts of the country or world you'd be willing to work in.

Check out some job listings to get an idea of what is out there:

- SCIENCE journal web page job search:
<http://recruit.sciencemag.org/jobsearch.dtl>
- Chronicles of Higher Education Web page:
<http://chronicle.com/jobs/>
- Society bulletins: ESA, AFS, etc.

What follows is an outline of the application process for an academic position with perspectives of both the Applicant and the Faculty conducting the search. Different positions will obviously vary from one to the next, but this outline can be used as a general guide and modified accordingly.

The Job Description

Faculty Considerations:

- Is this a replacement or new position?
- Create a search committee
- Write job description: General or Well Defined

Applicant:

- IF first position, consider temporary positions or post docs
- Choose jobs that are relevant and that fit your background, you don't want to apply to every single position
- Inquire with department or committee chair for more information

The Application (General)

Applicant:

- Make each application specific for each position
- Do background research on the department and school
 - Use the web page
 - Contact department secretary for list of faculty
 - Get a list of classes or course catalog
- Pick references that are appropriate and familiar
 - Balance their stature in the field with their familiarity
 - Give references needed info: vita and job description
- Put together an extensive vita/resume
 - Length should not be limited to 1-2 pages

- Structure vita to emphasize your strengths up front
- Keep format simple for easy viewing of different sections
- Basic contents: Education, Interests, Awards, Publications, Research Experience, Teaching Experience, Other Relevant Experiences, Presentations, Skills, Coursework, Professional Memberships
- Have a mentor look over your application package

Faculty:

- Want application packages that will provide enough information to make initial cuts
- Packages that are not complete will not be considered
- Recognizing candidates that are not qualified or that are “applying for anything that’s out there” is done in first screening.

The Application (Letter of Introduction)

Applicant:

- Recognize that this is the hardest component to put together, yet one of the most important. Thus, it should require a great deal of effort and thought.
- Indicate why you are applying for this position
- Why are you most qualified for this position?
- Where are your research interests?
 - Tie them to the department you are applying to
- What teaching experience or interests are relative to their program?
- Include a philosophy statement of research and teaching (may be separate section for some)

Faculty:

- Looking for personality, qualifications, and interest in position
- Used to screen for the short list
- May have different notification procedures at this stage

The Phone Interview (you make the short list)

Faculty:

- Looking at personality and fit to the department
- Looking for genuine interest
- Often use a standard list of questions prepared ahead of time
 - Often general in content, not very specific

Applicant:

- Note: this may be the “worst” part
- Be aware that there is no indication of your responses over the phone
- Do the interview where you won’t be disturbed
- Get the times correct and verify them with committee
- There may be a delay between you and the response in a conference call
- Different committees will have vary in their manner, some will use a straight list of questions and be very formal, others will have an intro and be less formal
- Relax, be yourself
- Be prepared, have some questions to ask them

Campus Interview (General)

Applicant:

- Recognize from the moment you arrive until you leave that you are on stage
- Put together a list of questions to ask them
- Have a list of questions you might be asked, be ready for them
- Again, do extensive background research on the department and school
 - Use the web page
 - Contact department secretary for list of faculty
 - Get a list of classes or course catalog
- Ask to visit with students if not part of itinerary
- Dress appropriately

Faculty:

- Set a formal itinerary with time allocated to committee, faculty members (groups or individually), students, administrators, and presentations
- Be sure questions focused on concerns/interests of department are asked
- Must incorporate multiple perspectives and acknowledge the hierarchy of administrators.
- Will time be given to allow candidate to explore on own?

Campus Interview (Presentations)

Applicant:

- Have talks very polished and ready to go
- Play off your strengths while being relevant to the audience
- Adapt your talk for each position
- Teaching Seminar
 - Pretend you are in a teaching classroom (really)
 - Format may vary with schools
 - Separate or mixed with research
 - Lower division or upper division
 - Be effective and engaging
- Research Seminar
 - Professionalism is key
 - Do you do sound research, how do you interpret results
 - Do you have the ability to process and communicate information
 - Make presentation relevant and appropriate to position
 - Include your research that is most current
 - What directions will your research take you?

Faculty:

- Looking for ability to present oneself and engage an audience
- What is the quality and potential of research?
- Think about how the individual would fit in the department

Campus Interview (Interviews)

Applicant:

- Use your background research in conversations and discussions
- Each one is different, be prepared for anything

- Feels like prelims, but if prepared and flexible you can do it
- Meeting with Department Head
 - Express your vision or direction within the department
 - Discuss ideas of potential funding sources
- Meeting with Dean
 - Questions will be highly variable
 - Inquire with department head about potential questions
- Meeting with students
 - This is the good stuff
 - Get a unique perspective on the department
 - Appreciate their revelations about the department
 - You should be prepared to get the discussion going
 - Grad students will want to know how you would run a lab
 - Be ready to talk about your thoughts on being an advisor

Faculty:

- How does the committee mix and interpret the various inputs?
 - Can be tricky, recognize biases
 - Meeting with students is not underestimated. Very important
- Did applicant address concerns/interests of department?
- Incorporate professional and personal impressions of candidate

Campus Interview (Social Events)

- May include dinner and receptions

Applicant:

- Loosen up, but remember you are still on stage
- Mingle, move around and converse with a variety of individuals
- Ask any questions more appropriate in informal setting
 - School system, health care, etc.
 - Spouse or family concerns (may be situation dependent)

Faculty:

- Want to make good impression with level of involvement from faculty and being personable
- Looking for candidate's ability to mix and mingle, and their comfort level
- Often this is the best time to see candidate's personality
 - Assess whether candidate will fit in
- Watching for signals or aspects that will only surface in this type of environment

Campus Interview (Wrap up)

- Sometimes there is an exit interview

Applicant:

- Ask any unanswered questions, or touch on subjects learned at interview.
- Ask about potential time frame of search
- Express how interested you are, and thank them

Faculty:

- This is an opportunity for candidate, limited expectations here

After Interview

Applicant:

- The waiting game begins, be patient
- If you had a good experience, drop search chair a thank you note (email is appropriate). This is optional.
- If you need to know timeline, ask for status of search
- If you are serious about this position, let them know of your timeline or potential conflicts

Faculty:

- Committee gathers all the information from all involved
- Committee makes recommendation to department head/chair, can be prioritized or given acceptable/unacceptable
- Voting positions and/or level of ultimate decision may vary

Notification

- Generally from department head/chair
- Can happen very quickly following interviews (2-3 days)
- If you made it to short list, you likely won't be left hanging
- This may vary from place to place, as there are different situations
- May get an oral notification, but remember it is not over until you have signed on the dotted line

Negotiations

Applicant:

- May be with Dean or Department Head
- Get information BEFOREHAND on salary and benefits if possible. Often this is public record.
- Have an idea of your start-up and equipment requirements.
- Be professional, but not greedy...compromise
- If spouse was not on interview, you may request another visit with them.
- If spouse is qualified for a different position, discuss possibilities now.

If You Do Not Get the Job (at any stage)

Applicant:

- It's okay to be "bummed", but try to make each attempt a positive experience that will help you get closer to what you want.
- Go ahead and ask for feedback from committee chair in every case
 - Can be very helpful
 - May or may not get a response
- Look over the process and see where you could improve or change things
- Keep at it.