Academic Job Search

The system of higher education in the U.S. is extremely complex. Therefore, the academic job search can vary depending on several factors:

1. **Your Field** - The appropriate job search strategies differ depending on your field and subfield. It is important to research the job market for your field to know what strategies are best.

2. **Type of Institution** - Job search strategies will also vary depending on the type of institution you are targeting, whether it is a large research university, a small research university, a four-year college, a two-year college or a community college.

3. **Prestige** - In general, universities with a national reputation put the most emphasis on research as a criterion of success for faculty members. Faculty members at four-year colleges with a national reputation may be required to do substantial research in addition to teaching. Other types of institutions, including regional and community colleges, may focus more on teaching attributes as a criterion for faculty success.

Once you’ve considered these factors, there are many questions you need to ask yourself:

- What are your short and long term goals?
- Considering the job market for your field, are temporary positions a common pathway or does that option run the risk of keeping you at that level?
- Who is your competition?
- Is it necessary to have your dissertation finished before applying? What are the risks of planning to finish it after you get the job?
- Is a post-doctorate position common or necessary for your field?
- What are the common hiring practices for your field? Are phone calls from advisors typical? Are they necessary?

Below are some areas for you to consider as you plan your academic job search. To continue the process, you will need to meet with your departmental academic advisor. She/he will be able to give you many details for your particular field and will be able to share contacts and experiences with you.

To get started, consider these steps:

**How to prepare**
You will need to understand the structure of academia and then research your particular job market.

**When to apply**
You may need to start applying at least a year before you would start a position. This varies by field and by institution.

**Where to apply**
You will need to evaluate where and what kind of position you are looking for and then apply to many positions. Remember to network with everyone you know (professors, your advisor, mentors, professional associations, conference colleagues, professional colleagues and more).
Resources that post positions in academia:
The Chronicle of Higher Education
http://chronicle.com/search/jobs/

The Higher Education Resource Hub
http://www.higher-ed.org/

Post Docs
http://www.postdocjobs.com/

PhD positions (academic, post docs and industry)
http://jobs.phds.org/

What materials do I need to prepare to apply:
When applying to academic positions, you may be asked to submit numerous materials such as letters of recommendation, a resume, curriculum vita, credential and/or cover letter. Requirements vary from field to field. Check with your department for specifics.

Finally, you will need to learn about and practice interviewing skills. Please review our “Interviewing Skills” success guide to learn about the details of interviewing. Then talk with your academic advisor to learn about the specifics of academic interviews. There may be several rounds of interviews, with the first one will possibly be a phone interview and the second interview will be on the institution’s campus. You may also be asked to give a presentation on your dissertation or other topic. Practicing interviewing is the best way to become skilled and comfortable with the process.

Throughout this process, stay in close touch with your academic advisor and she/he will guide you through the steps. There are also many resources online and in libraries that discuss the academic job search. You are more than welcome to make an appointment with your Career Consultant in the Career & Professional Development Center. Go to www.cmu.edu/career and login to Tartantrak and click on request a counseling appointment.

Updated 5/13/2014