



The system of higher education in the U.S. is extremely complex. Therefore, the academic job search, i.e. looking for a faculty/teaching position at a university/college, can vary depending on a number of factors such as your field, the type of institution at which you are looking and your specific interests.

To begin the process, you will first need to meet with your CMU departmental faculty advisor. They will be able to give you guidance on many details for your particular field/area and may be able to share specific contacts and experiences with you. As you meet with your advisor and prepare to begin your Academic job search, here are some aspects of the academic job search to consider:

### **Review and Analyze Several Factors:**

**Your Field** - Appropriate job search strategies differ depending on your field/major and subfield. It is important to research the job market for your field/area of study to know what strategies are best.

**Type and Size of Institution** - Job search strategies may 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.

**Reputation of Institution** - 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.

### **Prepare for Your Search - what to know:**

- What are your short and long-term goals?
- Are temporary positions a common pathway or does that option run the risk of keeping you at the same level?
- 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?

### **Plan Your Search with These Steps:**

#### **1. Prepare to apply**

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

**2. Create a timeline 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.

**3. Decide to which institutions to apply**

You will need to evaluate where and what kind of position you are looking for and then apply to many positions. Networking is an important part of your academic job search! Remember to network with people you know (professors, your advisor, mentors, professional associations, conference colleagues, professional colleagues and more).

**4. Prepare your application materials**

When applying to academic positions, you may be asked to submit numerous materials such as letters of recommendation, a curriculum vita (CV), transcripts, and/or cover letter. Requirements vary from field to field. Check with your department and/or read position postings carefully for specifics.

Some institutions may require a teaching statement/teaching philosophy and/or a research statement. CMU's Student Academic Success Center provides in-depth guides for both:

Teaching Philosophy  
Research Statement

**5. Prepare your interviewing skills**

Finally, you will need to learn about and practice interviewing skills. Please review our [Interviewing Skills quick tip](#) to learn about the details of interviewing. Then talk with your advisor to learn about the specifics of academic interviews. There may be several rounds of interviews. The first one may be a phone/Skype/virtual interview and the second interview will most likely 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. To see more interviewing tips, go to the [CPDC website](#) and click on 'Interviewing'.

**Job Postings in Academia:**

[The Chronicle of Higher Education](#)  
[Higher Education Jobs](#)  
[Post-Doctoral Positions](#)  
[PhD positions](#)

**Finally:**

Throughout this process, stay in close touch with your faculty 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. Login to [Handshake](#) and click on Career Center at the top, then Appointments, then Schedule a New Appointment.