Preparing Now for Next Year’s Academic Job Search in the Humanities and Social Sciences

FAQ

Q: Where do I look for jobs?
A: Start with the job list for the professional organization/society in your field (MLA, AAA, CAA, AHA, APAClassics, etc.). Ask your advisor/committee where jobs for your field are usually advertised. Academic job listings may also appear on the following websites:
   • The Chronicle of Higher Education: http://chronicle.com
   • Inside Higher Ed: https://careers.insidehighered.com
   • H-Net Job Guide: www.h-net.org/jobs
   • HigherEdJobs: www.higheredjobs.com
   • Academic360: www.academic360.com
   • AcademicJobsOnline: https://academicjobsonline.org
   • Consortium of Humanities Centers & Institutes: http://chcinetwork.org
   • Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC): www.hercjobs.org (for regional searches)
   • Council for Christian Colleges & Universities www.cccu.org/careers

Q: How much time does it take to apply for academic jobs?
A: A lot. Plan to spend part of the summer before you go on the market drafting and revising your job materials. You will want to show drafts to your committee/colleagues/Sheridan Center/CareerLAB and revise according to the feedback you receive. The materials you send out should be extensively revised, tailored for each position, and polished. Tailoring your applications, applying for jobs, and prepping for interviews will take a significant amount of time during the Fall semester when you are on the market.

Q: How long is a typical writing sample?
A: Writing samples usually range between 25-30 pages. This can be discipline-specific, so consult with your advisor on the norms for your field. Remember to send the materials asked of you. If a job ad asks for a 20-page writing sample, do not send 45 pages.

Q: How difficult is it to find an academic job? What is the placement rate for Brown PhDs in academic jobs?
A: Placement rates vary by department. Your DGS will have the most current statistics for PhDs in your department or program. Competition for tenure-track jobs is stiff. It is not uncommon for job ads to generate hundreds of applications depending on the field and subspecialty. This can make finding an academic job very difficult, even for highly qualified applicants from top programs. The Chronicle of Higher Education and Inside Higher Ed often publish articles and statistics related to the job market, as do professional associations, such as the MLA and AHA. The American Academy of Arts & Sciences recently published data on the downward trend in the number of Humanities faculty job advertisements since 2008.

Q: What do I do if I don’t get an offer for an academic job?
A: It can take a number of job cycles to find an academic job. If you do not receive a job offer your first (or second, or third) year on the market and you still have funding, you can revise your materials and try again the following year. If you are out of funding, you might consider temporary or visiting teaching positions. You might also explore careers outside of academia at any point in your job search. For help with non-academic job searches, see resources at the Sheridan Center, CareerLAB, and the Graduate School. Contact Jessica_Metzer@brown.edu for career consultations at the Sheridan Center.
Q: How do I deal with the rejection involved with the academic job market?
A: Rejection stings. It is normal to be disappointed if you do not receive an interview or an offer for a position. It can be helpful to remind yourself that the pool of qualified applicants is large and that a rejection is not a value judgment on your research or talent. It is definitely not a reflection on your worth as a person. It can be helpful to talk to a counselor about the stress associated with the job market and the feelings associated with rejection.

Q: What does a typical job offer look like?
A: Job offers are highly variable. Your offer will generally include information about salary, benefits, and teaching load. You might ask about the number of course preps, expected service and advising load, and leave/sabbatical time. Other benefits to inquire about might include health coverage/coverage for dependents, partner benefits, moving expenses, start-up or research funds, and partner hires (if applicable).

For an idea of the salary range for a position, consult the Chronicle: http://data.chronicle.com/faculty-salaries/, Higher Ed Jobs (by discipline): https://www.higheredjobs.com/salary/salaryDisplay.cfm?SurveyID=28, or Inside Higher Ed: https://www.insidehighered.com/aaup-compensation-survey/2014-2015. If the institution is public, check online for current salary information by department. When looking at average faculty salaries for an institution, remember that these numbers include higher paid fields, such as law and medicine. Try to compare disciplinary data when possible. Remember also to take the cost of living into account when making decisions about an offer. It is always wise to negotiate the initial offer you receive. For more info about how to negotiate a job offer see resources offered by the Sheridan Center and CareerLAB.

Q: What kinds of jobs support work visas for International applicants?
A: This can be variable. The job ad that appears on an institution’s HR website will usually specify whether or not visa support is available. If it does not, you might call the Human Resources department for the specific institution and ask about the position.