Interviews for academic jobs take many forms, from phone and Skype conversations to the brief 45-minute interview at a major convention to longer campus visits of one or two days. Whatever the interview forum, you need to speak clearly and concisely about your research and teaching in ways that appeal to specialists as well as generalists. You also need to convince your interviewers that you are the right person for the job. This section offers guidance on how to conduct yourself throughout the interview process. It will help you navigate the various stages of the interview process, from the first contact with a search committee through the process of negotiating the terms of a job offer.

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

Plan to spend a significant amount of time preparing for each of your interviews. You need to prepare answers to commonly asked questions, most especially those about your research, your teaching, and your interest in the institution offering the interview. This last item is crucial: there’s nothing more likely to offend a search committee than ignorance about the nature of their department, their students, and their mission.

Your dissertation advisor and faculty in your department can provide invaluable advice about academic interviews. You can also use the resources below to get a sense of the questions typically asked in academic interviews. Develop your own list of questions and practice answering them. Write down answers to key questions, practice delivering them aloud, and time your answers so that you’re not speaking non-stop for more than three minutes at a time. Once you’ve done this, schedule a mock interview with your department or the Sheridan Center.

• Questions to expect when interviewing  
  http://chronicle.com/article/The-Academic-Job-Interview-/44607/

• What deans, vice-presidents, and presidents tend to ask  

• Commonly fumbled interview questions  

• “The Interview”  
  http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/06/19/essay-how-do-well-interview-academic-job#sthash.qhxBJxG.dpbs

• “How to Shine in an Academic Interview”  
  http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2014/feb/07/prepare-academic-interviews-top-tips

CONFERENCE INTERVIEWS

Many first-round academic interviews take place at large national conferences and professional gatherings. Search committees often use these interviews to narrow the pool of job candidates to a few people who will then be invited to campus for a more intensive series of interviews. Conference interviews usually focus on broad topics. In all likelihood, you will be asked questions about the nature of your dissertation research, your
plans for future research, and the kinds of courses you might teach at their school. Conference interviews also offer you an opportunity to ask some preliminary questions about the institution and the department.

The resources below offer point-by-point advice on how to conduct yourself during a convention interview. These tips will help you depersonalize and feel reasonably confident in what is admittedly a difficult process.

- [http://chronicle.com/article/The-First-Interview/45903/](http://chronicle.com/article/The-First-Interview/45903/)

### Campus Visits

After a first-round interview at a major conference, or a successful phone or skype interview, a department may invite you to their campus for an extended interview. Campus visits often entail interviews with department faculty, deans, and university administrators; a teaching demonstration or research presentation; opportunities to meet undergraduate and graduate students in the department; and informal meetings over lunch and dinner.

Regardless of the nature of a meeting, the basic rule of thumb on campus visits is that you are always interviewing. You are under scrutiny whether you are at an informal gathering of students, having dinner with search committee members, or chatting one-on-one with a faculty member. Stay positive, polite, and professional, regardless of how someone else might seem. Remember that some of the tension you feel might result from departmental dynamics and have nothing to do with you.

The links below provide useful information on what to bring to a campus visit, how to conduct yourself while you are there, and how to follow-up with a search committee.

- [www.insidehighered.com/advice/2011/04/11/advice_on_the_campus_visit_for_an_academic_job_interview](www.insidehighered.com/advice/2011/04/11/advice_on_the_campus_visit_for_an_academic_job_interview)

### The Job Talk

Most campus visits include a job talk or teaching presentation to faculty, graduate students, and some undergraduates. The job talk is your chance to present your research (and the way you think) in detail to your potential colleagues. It's often followed by a question and answer period that tests your ability to think on your feet. If you're interviewing at a liberal arts school, you may be asked to give a teaching demonstration as well as, or instead of, a job talk. The search committee chair will tell you what kind of presentation to give.

The resources below will help you put together your job talk. It’s advisable to give a practice talk with a live audience. Practicing will help you to fine-tune your presentation and to increase your confidence. Check with your department to see if it offers colloquia in which graduate students present their work to other students and faculty. You can also have your job talk videotaped and critiqued by two Sheridan Center Fellows. For more information, visit [http://brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/consulting/pcpaper.html](http://brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/consulting/pcpaper.html).

- Excellent summary of how to prepare a job talk
  - [http://iccweb.ucdavis.edu/graduates/PerfectJobTalk.htm](http://iccweb.ucdavis.edu/graduates/PerfectJobTalk.htm)
- Advice for job talks in computer science
  - [www.cs.washington.edu/homes/mernst/advice/academic-job.html#The_job_talk](www.cs.washington.edu/homes/mernst/advice/academic-job.html#The_job_talk)
NEGOTIATING A JOB OFFER

Before accepting a job offer, you need to understand and evaluate the entire job package, including financial benefits and fit with the organization. This process can be confusing and stressful, especially for new graduates negotiating for the first time. Knowing what to expect, and being prepared, is essential.

Keep in mind that an offer is more than just your salary. Your full package includes medical and other benefits, such as relocation benefits, vacation and sick time, evaluation procedures, and terms of employment. Overall compensation, and components of compensation, can vary significantly.

Prioritize your goals in the negotiating process. Decide which things you really want and which things you're willing to be flexible on. Advocate for yourself in a professional way that is not demanding. You want to start the job having managed your first task in a positive manner.

Negotiating Salary

Schools vary enormously in resource allocation and overall compensation. It’s often difficult to predict which items in a contract are and are not negotiable. Salary is almost always negotiable. Below are some tips for how to talk—and how not to talk—about your salary requirements.

• Delay talking about salary for as long as possible. If asked during the interview process, say that you assume salary will be based on education, experience, and the industry standard. Don't give a number – it might be too low!

• When the offer is extended, show appreciation and interest, but don't respond immediately. Let the employer know that you want to review the offer (ask for it in writing) and that you need time to make the best decision for you and the employer. Ask when a decision is expected.

• Ask for more time to research the school, to compare offers, or to look at cost-of-living factors. Check The Chronicle of Higher Education for the average salary of your type of position. Faculty averages for 2009-2010 are published at http://chronicle.com/article/Chart-Average-Faculty/64500. Cost-of-living calculations can be made at http://cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/costofliving/costofliving.html

• When asking for higher salary, point to specifics: cost of living issues, average salaries for your position type, years of experience you have in the profession.

Negotiating Considerations

Many aspects of a job offer, such as health insurance, retirement or pension benefits, and service requirements, are not negotiable. Those items listed below often are negotiable, so ask about those that are appropriate to your situation.
• **Signing Bonus:** Many universities cap salaries at particular levels. If you are at the higher end of a pay scale, you may not be able to negotiate a salary increase, but you might be able to secure a signing bonus.

• **Office & Lab Equipment:** Yes, this is often negotiable. Inquire about the office support available, access to office supplies and photocopiers, computers and phones, etc.

• **Research Assistance:** Does the institution fund research travel? What are the conditions of such funding? What kind of departmental and institutional support can you get for seeking/managing grants?

• **Teaching Assistance:** If you’re teaching large lecture classes, will you have teaching assistants? How many? Is it possible to have course reductions your first year?

• **Sabbaticals:** Inquire about the length and number of sabbaticals. They can be useful time for conducting further research and preparing manuscripts for publication.

• **Moving Expenses:** Institutions will often cover all or part of your moving expenses.

• **Appointments for Partners:** An institution may not be willing to hire your partner, but it may offer other resources for helping partners find academic or non-academic employment.

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**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**Negotiating a first job offer**

- “Negotiate like a Professor” [http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2011/03/14/essay_on_how_to_negotiate_during_the_academic_job_process#sthash.Xr2uDmj.dpbs](http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2011/03/14/essay_on_how_to_negotiate_during_the_academic_job_process#sthash.Xr2uDmj.dpbs)

**Negotiating an offer in the sciences**

- [http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/0280/negotiating_give_me_sir_can_i_have_some_more/](http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/0280/negotiating_give_me_sir_can_i_have_some_more/)

**Understanding the Negotiation Process**

- A guide to negotiating offers from Florida State University: [http://www.career.fsu.edu/employment/negotiating-offers-guide.html](http://www.career.fsu.edu/employment/negotiating-offers-guide.html)
- An article on salary negotiation from Salary.com: [http://www.salary.com/Articles/ArticleDetail.asp?part=par186](http://www.salary.com/Articles/ArticleDetail.asp?part=par186)

**Determining a Fair Salary**

• Moving.com provides a salary calculator that allows you to see what people are making according to location and profession: http://www.moving.com/real-estate/salary-calculator.asp