**A giant list of interview questions common in economics hiring**

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*Many thanks to Jose Corpuz for compiling these from multiple sources. James has simply grouped them together by type, deleted duplicates/near duplicates, added a couple more, and added anecdotes from Costas. The original sources are Cawley, the EEA job market advice, the Harvard job market advice, questions Warwick has asked, and various lists James compiled from friends, students and colleagues.*

**Questions you will be asked in almost every interview:**

* Tell us about your job market paper?
* To what journal will you send your paper?
* Tell us about a paper that isn't your job market paper?
* What is your research agenda for the next 5 years?
* What can you teach?
* If you could teach any course, what would it be?
* Do you have any questions for us?

**James’ template for how to answer “tell us about your job market paper”:**

First 30 seconds (50 words) or “The Elevator Pitch”:

* Name, affiliation, fields, "type of economist" (reduced form, theory, structural, RCT...)
* Title of job market paper
* One sentence: main identification strategy and main result in paper (other people don't put this first but I find that making a single clear concrete statement of what you do makes everything else much easier to follow)
* One sentence: the big unanswered question or contribution you make
* One sentence: why this matters
* Any other "can't miss" major results
* *Note: this is also what you’re supposed to say if you, e.g. get introduced to David Autor on a train platform and he asks “so what do you do?”*
* *Note: 100 words a minute is a bit slower than most people talk, but will help you keep things focused and accounts for interruptions. I find in lectures that I can speak about 120 wpm before I get student complaints that I talk too fast.*

Next 2 minutes (200 words) (or, with the elevator pitch, “The 3 minute spiel”:

* Establish the hole in the literature you fill and importance of your question (50 words)
* Explain what you do and why it's awesome (identification strategy, new data created, etc...) (50 words)
* State main results, including interpretation, magnitude, etc... (50 words)
* State "economics" (logic, mechanisms, tradeoffs) explaining the result (50 words)

Next 5 minutes (500 words) (or, with the above, “The job market spiel”):

* Wait, they let you keep talking without interruption? That’s very surprising... By now, you will expect the interview to have taken a seminar-style format with interviewers trying to find fault with your paper and challenging you on every little thing. But, just in case, here's more bullets of important things you can talk about, each of which is maybe 50 words.
* Contribution to the literature
* Theory/tradeoffs/conceptual framework
* Data creation and assembly efforts
* Identification strategy and why it is convincing
* Main results, but presented differently from before
* Main robustness
* Other results beyond main (e.g. if there's a structural estimation, data from a second country, etc...)
* Additional evidence needed for evidence on mechanisms
* Policy lessons or lessons for the economic literature
* How you plan to pursue these themes in the future, transitioning into your other papers or your future research agenda

**BEWARE: THE REST OF YOUR PAPERS MATTER**

* Although the above is written as if the job market paper is the main paper on which you will have to give a prepared spiel, it is not the only paper on which you will be expected to bring your “A game.” A very common flyout question is “tell us about a paper that isn’t your job market paper.” For that, you will need a spiel similar to the above for that second paper.
* Costas has an excellent anecdote. He started to give his job market paper spiel, when someone on the interview panel said “no, I’ve already seen you present that.” So, he started on his second paper. And a different member of the interview panel said “no, I’ve already seen you present that.” And again a third time. He was expected to talk in his interview about his *fourth* paper in as much detail, and with as much grilling, as his JMP. So: if it is listed on your CV, prepare an at-least-five-minutes spiel, and be prepared to answer hard questions while defending it.
* Warwick uses a somewhat unconventional interview template at the ASSAs. Rather than asking “tell us about your job market paper?”, we have already read it. We ask about details. A typical first question in the interview might be “in Table 2 you have village fixed effects, but you could easily have had village-by-month fixed effects. Why didn’t you choose to include these?”. James suspects about 5% of schools do interviews of this type.
* Warwick also has a “vaporware detection question” in our interviews. We select a “work in progress” title at random from the CV and ask about it. You would be shocked at how often a title on a CV is little more than a title. If it is on your CV, be prepared to discuss it at length and impress us with the progress you have made.
* Warwick HR demands that we hold a proper interview during the flyout, and that we film it. We use this to demand candidates send a second paper, and we grill the candidate on this just as we would the JMP. This is an excellent tool for uncovering candidates with thin pipelines.

**Other Standard Questions Grouped by Type**

*Questions that test whether you understand how “economics” works as a field, what constitutes “general interest”, who edits what journals, and what it takes to be published:*

* Why is this economics?
* Why is this an interesting question? Why should we care about your results?
* To what journal will you send your job market paper and why?
* What journals do you see yourself publishing in? In general, what journals do you consider to be the appropriate outlets for your work?
* What NBER group would you see yourself in?
* Who would be the ideal referees for your job market paper, and why?
* What is your contribution to the literature?

*Questions that test how deeply you understand your own work and the implications of the decisions you’ve made:*

* How do you motivate the crazy assumptions in your papers?
* Why didn’t you estimate (an alternative regression model) instead?
* Why didn’t you use (an alternative dataset) instead?
* Will your research use structural models or a more reduced form approach? Are you empirical or theoretical? Structural or reduced form? Why?
* Why haven’t you done any empirical (theoretical) work; do you intend to?
* We have a strong behavioral team: what do you think about lab experiments?
* How would you test your model?
* How is your model identified?
* What is a real-life example of what your job market paper is about?
* Why didn't anybody write this paper before?
* Greatest strength, weakness of your paper?
* If you were the referee of your own paper, what would you say?
* How long does it take to execute an RCT like the one you used for your JMP?
* Lots of questions about design and implementation, recruitment of participants, intervention design etc.
* Imagine you are the referee for your own paper. Why would you reject it?

*Questions that test whether you’re informed about your field broadly, and not just the very narrow literature surrounding your paper:*

* If you were to teach a Ph.D. course in your field, what would be the key papers on the syllabus?
* Which senior economists do you wish to emulate? Why?
* Tell us the best paper you’ve seen presented in a seminar recently, and explain what made it the best.
* Based on your reading of the literature and participation in seminars and conferences, where do you see (your field) going?
* What will be your major conferences?
* Are you familiar with the results by person Y on your topic
* Who would you invite to seminar?

*Questions that test whether you think broadly, read widely, are actively engaged, and didn’t just write a thesis by blindly following supervisor instructions:*

* How did you get the idea for this paper? (Interviewers may be curious if your advisor simply handed you the idea.)
* What did you contribute and what did your coauthors contribute?
* What seminars do you attend?
* What is the best seminar you have seen/paper you have read recently?
* Do you plan to continue collaborating with your coauthors/advisors? (An ongoing working relationship could be good, if it leads to good publications and is a relationship of relative equals, or troubling if a candidate continues as a de facto research assistant on the advisor’s projects because the candidate lacks original ideas.)
* If you could answer any research question in a paper, even if it took a million dollars and several years, what question would it be and how would you answer it?

*Questions that test whether we’ll be able to convince the dean (who hates economists, thinks they’re expensive and bring in no funding) that you actually add something to the university.*

* What are the policy implications of your work?
* Grants you have applied for/gotten/how you plan to get them.
* How you will interest a broader audience outside economics or outside academia (“impact” in REF-speak)
* What is your experience raising funding and who are your donors?

*Questions that ensure you have more than just your job market paper*

* When will you finish your dissertation?
* Tell us about a paper that isn’t your job market paper [and then expect to be grilled like it is your job market paper]

*Questions on your future agenda*

* What questions are at the core of your research agenda?
* What are the next three papers you will write? What are the next few papers you plan to write, that you have not yet written? (Be prepared to discuss the research question, conceptual framework, data, and methods on each.)
* What is your research agenda for the next five years?
* In which field do you see yourself working in next 3 years?
* Where are you heading; what’s your research agenda; beyond thesis, what are you doing?
* In your thesis representative of your future work (OK either way)?
* Which economist would you like to resemble 5-10 years from now and why?
* Tell us about <insert title of other “working paper” or “work in progress” listed on your CV or website>? [and then expect to be grilled almost like it is your job market paper. Don’t list vaporware on your “works in progress.” Have some progress to report.]
* Who will write your tenure letters, and what will they say you have contributed to the field?

*Questions that test whether you’re seriously interested in the department*

* What attracts you to our university?
* Do you think you'd be happy in a department like ours? (Especially likely to be asked by interdisciplinary departments or liberal arts colleges.)
* Why are you interested in our school? What in particular led you to apply for a job with us?
* Is the location of our school (rural, regional) a problem?
* Why would you like to work at our university/ move to our city? Why did you apply here?
* Who could you work with in in our department/university?
* Do you have questions for us? Do you have any questions about our school? (Optimal answer: I know that your school is great, and that’s all that matters right now.)
* What attracts you about life in <country>?
* What attracts you about life in <city>?

*Questions on teaching*

* What is your teaching experience?
* What would you like to teach? What textbooks or journal articles would you use to teach those courses?
* How would you teach? What is your teaching philosophy?
* How would you teach our students (undergraduate / masters / nontraditional / Ph.D. students) in particular?
* How would you teach XYZ? (what would you bring to the course?)
* Are you a good teacher?
* How will you interact with feisty business students?
* How has your teaching evolved so far?
* When you teach, what role does technology play in engaging and interacting with students?
* What would you like to teach? Teaching interests?
* Dream course?
* Design your own Ph.D. course?
* If you were to each a graduate class in <field>, what would you put on the reading list?
* What do you think would make you effective at supervising PhD students?
* How do you get a large class of undergraduates to engage with material that they may not find intrinsically interesting?
* If you were to teach an undergraduate class in <field>, what would you put on the reading list?
* Basically: for both your primary and secondary fields, have an idea in mind of what you would assign for an undergraduate class and a graduate class.

*Trick questions:*

* Where else are you interviewing?
* How's the market this year?

*Other*

* Is there anything you would like us to know that isn’t on your CV or in your application? (This is an opportunity to explain why you think it’s a good match.)
* Past service/desired service (e.g. seminars organized)
* Other than through teaching and research, how do you see yourself contributing to helping run and enhance the reputation of the department?

*Good answers to “do you have any questions for us”?*

* James’ answer on the market in 2010: “My advisor told me that it’s a bad idea to ask questions at this stage, so I don’t have any at the moment.” YMMV.
* Tell me about your department’s research environment. Is there much mentoring of junior faculty by senior faculty? What resources are available to help new faculty develop their research?
* How do you see me fitting in your department?
* What is the teaching load? What is the typical course reduction for new faculty? Would I have an opportunity to teach graduate students? Will I be able to teach courses in my field?
* What is the quality of the graduate students? To which fields are they most attracted? Are they involved with the research of the faculty? Are there resources to support graduate students as research assistants? What is your goal in educating graduate students: to produce academics and researchers?
* I saw on your web page that you have *N* faculty; is that the number of lines in the department? (If the number of faculty is well below the number of lines then that implies that the department might be hiring a lot of faculty in the coming years.)
* What are your expectations about grant writing by junior faculty? Are faculty allowed to use grant money to buy teaching reductions for the purposes of research?
* What is your main research project at the moment? (It is important to ask other people about their research and discuss it in a way that reveals your interest in economic questions outside of your area.)
* Are you happy with the research environment here?
* How does this department compare to the others you’ve been in?
* What courses are you teaching, and how much choice did you have?
* Which seminars do you regularly attend?
* Are there any units outside of the department I should know about, for example, any interdisciplinary centers that offer research grants?
* What is the budgetary future of the department? Will there be more junior faculty hired in the near future?
* Were you satisfied with the start-up package provided to you as a new faculty member?
* What sort of administrative work do junior faculty do? For example, serving on search committees or organizing seminars?
* How do you envision the department changing in the future? Is there an intention to build in any particular area? What are your goals as (Dean / Chair)?
* How do you evaluate faculty for contract renewal and for tenure? What has happened in the last few tenure reviews?
* How strong are the links between the department and other units of the University?
* Is the administration supportive of the department (e.g. has there generally been agreement on tenure cases, is the Dean generous with resources)?
* How do you like living here? Where do faculty choose to live?