

A GUIDE (AND ADVICE)  
FOR ECONOMISTS  
ON THE U. S.  
JUNIOR ACADEMIC JOB MARKET

John Cawley\*

*Job Openings for Economists*  
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Abstract

This document describes the U. S. academic job market for new Ph.D. economists and offers advice on conducting an academic job search. It reports findings from published papers, describes practical details, and provides links to internet resources. Topics addressed include: preparing to go on the market, applying for academic jobs, interviewing, campus visits, offers and negotiating, diversity, and dual job searches.

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\* Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University, and NBER. Email: [jhc38@cornell.edu](mailto:jhc38@cornell.edu)  
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## Introduction

This document has two purposes. The first is to describe the U. S. academic job market for new Ph.D. economists; specifically: to list deadlines, outline what salaries and benefits have recently been offered, and describe what a job candidate should expect at different stages of the hiring process. The second purpose of this document is to offer advice on conducting an academic job search.

In offering advice, this document takes as given many of the most important factors that drive hiring decisions: the quality of your research, your graduate training, and the recommendations of your advisors. For this reason, following the advice in this guide cannot guarantee you a job. The advice herein focuses on presentation and etiquette, which at the margin may influence the hiring decision. I hope that you will find this guide helpful, but every job market search is different and the experiences reflected here may not match your own.

The junior academic job market for economists is continuously evolving and much of what is in print on the subject is out of date; e.g. the papers published in the *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings* in volumes 49 (1959), 52 (1962), 61 (1971), and 69 (1979). The topic is so broad that it is difficult for any single paper to be comprehensive; job candidates face high time costs to independently compile information from the many published papers. In addition, many practical details of the job search have never been published. To supply these details, unpublished guides have circulated for years, including several that influenced this document: McLaughlin (1986), Conlin and Dickert (1995), Mustard (1997), Murray (1998), Domowitz (2001), and Butler and Crack (2001). In recent years, some departments have conveyed the practical details of academic job searches through online guides; e.g. Levine (2002) and Goldin (2002). In the context of the previous literature, this document has three goals: report the still-timely findings from published papers, describe the practical details and offer the advice that in the past were communicated orally or through unpublished guides, and provide links to internet resources.

The first half of this guide is outlined according to the chronology of a job search. The second half is devoted to issues of diversity, dual job searches, a brief summary, and a glossary.

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The timing with which you will pass through stages of the job market depends on the market segments in which you participate. Carson and Navarro (1988) define three segments of the academic job market for new economists:

1. The pre-emptive market: conducted at an accelerated pace by departments seeking to interview prior to the ASSA meetings the candidates they identify as a close match. Typically only the top candidates and departments participate in this market. Informal recommendation and scouting play a greater role in candidate selection in the pre-emptive market than in the two subsequent market segments.
2. The primary market: the largest of the three segments. Initial interviews take place at the ASSA meetings in early January.
3. The secondary market: used by departments if their top candidates in the primary market

proved to be poor matches or if the department advertised a job opening so late as to be unable to interview at the ASSA meetings. Campus visits in the secondary market begin after the primary market has begun to clear.

The schedule for each of the three market segments is listed in Table 1. Unless stated otherwise, the timing of events reported in this document is that for the primary market.

**Table 1:  
Schedule of Job Search  
By Job Market Segment**

<b>Segment of Market</b>	<b>Applying for Jobs</b>	<b>First Interview Conducted at ASSA Meetings?</b>	<b>Campus Visits</b>	<b>Offers and Negotiations</b>
Pre-Emptive	October-November	No	December	December
Primary	October-December	Yes	January-March	February-March
Secondary	October-February	Maybe	March-April	March-May

Note:  
Segments are defined according to Carson and Navarro (1988).

There are two major types of academic employers: research institutions and teaching institutions. Both types value proficiency in research and teaching, but in general, tenure decisions are more heavily based on research record, and less heavily based on teaching proficiency, at research universities than at teaching institutions. Much of the information in this guide applies to both markets, but the guide is primarily targeted to applicants to research universities.

In an academic job search, success is defined as a good match of applicant and department. In order for you to find a good match, it is crucial that you understand where you fit in the field of economics: you need to know in what field(s) of economics you will work, the type of research you will pursue, and your comparative advantages as a researcher. It may be difficult for you, as

a graduate student, to know where you fit in the discipline, but that information will help you immensely on the job market. An important way that you can increase the probability of finding a good match is to be honest with your advisors and potential employers about your interests, skills, and what you are looking for in a match.

Avoid thinking of other job market candidates as direct competitors. Each of you is searching for the best match, which is a function of individual characteristics. Be nice to others who are on the job market; share information and be supportive.

During your search, keep in mind two basic facts about the job market for new economics Ph.D.s. The first is trickle down. Each year, almost every economics Ph.D. program produces more Ph.D.s than it will hire. As a result, candidates from the top departments trickle down, filling openings at lower-ranked departments, crowding most of the graduates of those departments to jobs in departments further down the rankings. Stock, Alston, and Milkman (2000) find that the vast majority of new economics Ph.D.s in 1995-96 moved to jobs in departments at least 50 ranks below their graduate department; excluding moves to unranked departments, the average drop was 59 ranks. On the bright side, the second basic fact is that almost everyone finds a job. In surveys of new economics Ph.D.s in the late 1990s, both Siegfried and Stock (1999) and Stock et al. (2000) find that only 3% were unemployed shortly after the job search season.

## **1. Preparing to Go on the Job Market**

Your dissertation advisors will help you determine whether you are ready to go on the job market. You should not go on the market without their approval. The most important indicator of your readiness is whether you will have a good job market paper completed in the fall. A second indicator is whether the progress on the rest of your dissertation is such that you are likely to defend the following spring. Sometimes graduate students who don't feel fully ready consider going on the market selectively, applying to only a few places, and then if necessary going on the market in earnest the next year. My opinion is that this is a bad strategy. There are high fixed costs (both money and time) to going on the market. Moreover, departments may notice that you have been on the market two years in a row and assume that you bombed on the market the first time. Make sure that you are ready and then conduct a full market search. Alternatively, apply for postdoctoral fellowships and then conduct a full market search in two years. (Sometimes circumstances change and people are forced to withdraw from the market. It is costless to do so before departments mail packets of their job market candidates' curriculum vitae to prospective employers in early fall. If you withdraw after the departmental mailing, some prospective employers may remember you as having been on the market, and you may be viewed negatively the next time you go out.) You should have the approval of your advisors the spring before you will go on the market. This section is devoted to things you can do during the spring and summer to prepare for your job search.

Prospective employers will judge you by your job market paper and how well you present it. Try to complete your job market paper by the end of summer. The job search will likely consume more time than you anticipate (October to March), leaving you with little time to revise your paper. Keep your advisors up-to-date with your research and think carefully about their critiques. You will likely have blind spots with respect to your research, so also ask faculty and fellow graduate students who have no previous exposure to your work to read and critique your paper. Present your job market paper at seminars and conferences. You will quickly learn what other people think are the weak points; work to strengthen those areas. Practice will also

enhance your presentation skills.

Prepare your curriculum vitae (CV). It can take a surprisingly long time. There is no single style that you must use; study the CVs of the previous year's job candidates from top Ph.D. programs. The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) web site provides links to the job placement web pages (which contain job candidates' CVs) for major economics departments in the U.S.; the URL is <http://www.nber.org/candidates/>. Also, your department may have on file copies of job candidate CVs from recent years; examine the CVs of those who got good jobs. Keep your CV current; the date your CV was revised should appear somewhere on the document. Keep detailed lists of every presentation, every award and grant you receive, and the journals for which you have refereed. Some of this may not appear on your current CV but you may modify your CV over time and create different versions. Maintaining an up-to-date master list of all of your accomplishments will make it easy for you to create a CV for any given circumstance. On your CV, list a phone number at which you can be reached if prospective employers wish to interview you. Make sure that you list a number connected to voice mail or an answering machine. If you list a phone number associated with an office used by a large number of graduate students you may fail to receive some messages. Many departments now initiate contact via email but you still want to receive any interview requests that do come by telephone. Create a website from which prospective employers may download your CV and job market paper; Adobe Acrobat is the best format for these documents.

Decide which types of jobs are the best match for you, in terms of field of specialization, type of department, and type of institution. Consider economics departments, business schools, and schools of public policy. Health economists will also want to consider schools of public health and medical schools. You may also want to consider searches in government (e.g. the Federal Reserve banks, the Bureau of Labor Statistics), international organizations (e.g. the World Bank, the IMF), think tanks (e.g. RAND, Mathematica), and the private sector -- all of which are outside the scope of this document.

Decide which faculty you will ask to write letters of recommendation and keep them informed of

your research progress. In selecting your letter writers, it may be useful to know which professors in your program have a history of placing their students in good jobs. Letters from senior faculty are usually more influential than those from junior faculty.

Buy at least two nice, conservative, professional outfits. You don't want to be frantically searching for appropriate outfits just before interviews.

There are several items that can make your job search easier.

- A laptop is useful while traveling for continuing to work on your dissertation and for checking email from hotels. You will need to stay in close email contact throughout your job market search.
- A cell phone is useful for staying in touch with potential employers while you travel. List your cell phone number on your CV.
- A briefcase in which to carry copies of your CV, papers, and the materials that will be handed to you during interviews.
- A handheld organizer (e.g. Palm Pilot). Your schedule will be hectic during the job market and such a device will help you stay organized. Back it up regularly on your PC so that even if you lose the organizer there exists a record of your appointments. If you are going to use an organizer, become comfortable with it before the job market intensifies; you don't want to be having technical difficulties when you are most anxious and busy.
- A carry-on bag that has a "suiter". A carry-on is useful because the risk of your luggage being lost is higher if you check it. (The first time my luggage was lost by an airline was on my first campus visit as a job candidate. Moreover, in the first interview that I helped to conduct, the applicant's luggage had been lost.) A suiter prevents wrinkling.

Join airline frequent flier programs and hotel frequent stayer programs. You might as well collect the benefits for all the traveling you'll be doing!

Find out which faculty member will serve as your department's Job Placement Coordinator and



determine what the Coordinator does to assist job market candidates. Find out if your department ranks job candidates by field. Determine whether your department offers financial support to its job candidates. Some departments offer no financial assistance, but others subsidize mailing costs or pay for travel to conferences at which you interview.

Determine all of the deadlines for your department: e.g. for CVs (to be compiled into a departmental mailing) and for requesting letters of recommendation. Your politeness and punctuality will help your department to help you with your job search.

If you will be working as a teaching assistant or research assistant during your job search, be sure that your boss knows in advance that you will be on the market. Plan in advance how to manage your work responsibilities while juggling the demands of the job market.

## 2. Applying for Academic Jobs

In early fall, look for job openings on the following websites.

- Job Openings for Economists (JOE): <http://www.aeaweb.org/joe/> Jobs are posted monthly (except January and July) around the fifth day of the month. In a survey of Ph.D. economists who graduated during 1996-97, Siegfried and Stock (2000) found that JOE was rated the most effective method of job search.
- Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM): <http://www.appam.org/services/jobbank/pos/> Jobs are posted continuously. You may post your CV on their website.
- Economics Research Network: <http://www.ssrn.com/update/ern/index.html>
- Financial Economics Network: <http://www.ssrn.com/fen/index.html>
- International Health Economics Association: <http://www.healtheconomics.org>
- Chronicle of Higher Education: <http://chronicle.merit.edu/jobs/> New job listings are posted every business day, and remain online for 30 days. Most economics departments do not advertise their positions in the Chronicle, but you might find ads from interdisciplinary or unorthodox departments.
- Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP): <http://www.cswep.org/positionsavailable.html>

Table 2 describes the supply of new American Ph.D.s in economics using data from The Survey of Earned Doctorates, a census of all individuals receiving a research doctorate from a U.S. institution in an academic year. In the year 2001, U. S. universities granted 930 Ph.D.s in economics. Table 2 indicates that in recent years about 72% of recipients of an economics Ph.D. from a U.S. university were male, and about 40% were U.S. citizens. Scott and Siegfried (2002) report the characteristics of recipients of an economics Ph.D. from an American university for each five-year period from 1960-64 to 1995-99. They find that over this period the number of economics Ph.D.s awarded by U.S. universities doubled, the percentage of recipients who were male fell from 95.8% to 75.1%, and the percentage of recipients who were American citizens fell

from 75.7% to 42.9%.

**Table 2:**  
**Recipients of an Economics Doctorate**  
**at U.S. Universities, 1998-2001**

	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Economics Ph.D.s Granted by U.S. Universities	998	927	948	930
<i>Gender</i>				
Men	72.5%	72.4%	72.9%	71.8%
Women	27.2%	27.2%	26.9%	28.0%
<i>Citizenship</i>				
U.S. Citizens	41.0%	43.1%	41.5%	38.0%
Non-U.S. Citizens with Permanent Visas	8.0%	7.2%	5.4%	5.3%
Non-U.S. Citizens with Temporary Visas	41.3%	45.0%	48.6%	52.5%

Notes: Totals include doctorates in economics and econometrics.

Source: NSF (2002, 2001, 2000, 1999), Appendix Tables A-3a.

Percents do not always sum to 100% because of non-response and rounding.

To complement Table 2, which describes the supply of new economics Ph.D.s from American universities, Table 3 presents evidence on the demand for new economics Ph.D.s. It lists the number of new academic jobs listed in JOE by month for the past seven years. In 2002, a total of 1,487 new academic jobs were advertised. In recent years the number of new jobs posted in JOE is roughly 50% greater than the number of new economics Ph.D.s granted by American universities, but this does not necessarily mean that many jobs go unfilled. The JOE totals include not just openings for assistant professors but also ones at the senior level. Furthermore, the set of people competing for the junior academic jobs posted in JOE includes not just those about to receive their economics Ph.D. from a U.S. university but also those who are earning their economics Ph.D. at a university outside the U.S., current junior faculty and postdoctoral fellows seeking new jobs, and to some extent those who earned a Ph.D. in public policy or business.

Table 3 indicates that it is the October issue of JOE that typically contains the most new job advertisements, but issues for November and December are also large. In contrast, the issues of

JOE published March through June contain relatively few new jobs.

**Table 3:**  
**Number of New Academic Jobs Posted in JOE**  
**By Month, 1996-2002**

<b>Month</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
February	76	93	91	106	108	93	131
March				29	56	69	49
April	45	46	74	85	64	71	51
May				33	48	29	39
June	41	67	59	27	27	39	56
August	50	83	93	130	126	108	89
September				99	154	144	108
October	401	386	510	483	456	495	467
November	264	271	317	350	320	341	315
December	162	208	226	198	276	200	182
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,039</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>1,370</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>1,487</b>

Notes:

Includes both junior and senior openings.

JOE began publishing March, May, and September issues in 1999.

Sources: Siegfried (2003, 2002, 2001), Tables 1, and Hinshaw (2000, 1999, 1998, 1997), Tables 1.

Table 4 lists the number of times in each of the last several years that JOE listings have specified certain fields of economics as the focus of the search. Consistently, the fields listed most often are: Mathematical and Quantitative Methods, International, Microeconomics, Industrial Organization, and Macro and Money. Fields that are rarely listed as the focus of a job search include the narrower classifications Methodology and History of Economic Thought, Economic Systems, and Economic History. Some searches are narrowly focused on the listed field while for others it is a general guideline and the department expects to hire the best available candidate.

**Table 4:**  
**Fields of Specialization Sought In Job Openings for Economists**  
**1996-2002**

<b>Field of Specialization Sought</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Mathematical and Quantitative Methods	230	344	361	425	491	428	435
International Economics	253	282	323	302	364	307	374
Microeconomics	198	279	321	370	385	357	363
Industrial Organization	213	272	313	330	388	322	338
Any Field	179	190	195	223	290	303	323
Macroeconomics and Monetary Economics	267	290	295	322	317	317	310
Financial Economics	174	241	256	283	312	280	286
Labor and Demographic Economics	126	165	201	203	267	237	231
Agricultural and Natural Resource Economics	132	175	187	206	231	178	202
Public Economics	127	168	180	258	217	208	201
Health, Education and Welfare	102	126	202	199	201	211	195
Economic Development, Technological Change	121	140	157	149	149	174	174
Business Administration; Business Economics; Marketing, Accounting	61	76	95	94	119	87	111
Urban, Rural, and Regional Economics	53	84	68	102	100	84	82
General Economics and Teaching	32	69	95	102	94	82	74
Law and Economics	33	44	61	62	61	46	59
Other Special Topics	26	23	32	44	50	52	52
Administrative Positions	40	40	40	63	78	35	32
Economic Systems	27	26	32	37	28	23	21
Economic History	21	23	24	33	35	29	20
Methodology and History of Economic Thought	16	11	14	25	21	16	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,431</b>	<b>3,068</b>	<b>3,452</b>	<b>3,832</b>	<b>4,198</b>	<b>3,776</b>	<b>3,894</b>

Notes:

Includes both junior and senior openings, and nonacademic as well as academic jobs.

Advertisements may list more than one field of specialization.

Sources: Siegfried (2003, 2002, 2001), Tables 3, and Hinshaw (2000, 1999, 1998, 1997), Tables 3.

Each month that JOE is published, assess how well each new listing satisfies your preferences and constraints. It is expected that you will apply for some jobs you are unsure about; the job market is a learning process for both applicants and employers with interviews and campus visits used to gather information about the quality of match. However, do not apply for jobs that you are certain you would not accept; it is a waste of resources for you and the employer.

For how many jobs should you apply? That depends on how many job listings appear to be a good match with your preferences and constraints. In the Stock et al. (2000) sample of economics job candidates during 1995-96, the average applicant sent 76 applications; 25% sent 100 or more. List (2000) finds for a sample of job seekers at the 1997 ASSA meetings that the mean number of applications mailed for academic jobs was 41, with a standard deviation of 32.

You might find rankings of departments useful in focusing your search. However, keep in mind that the goal of your search is not a job at the highest-ranked department, but a job for which you are a good match. There are several rankings of economics departments:

- National Research Council (NRC). <http://www.nap.edu/html/researchdoc/> The NRC rankings (Goldberger et al., 1995) are the gold standard; they reflect faculty publications, citations, federal grant support, awards, and academic reputation.
- Coupé (2002) rankings are based on faculty publications 1969-2000 using a variety of weights to adjust for journal quality and coauthorship. The report is online at: <http://student.ulb.ac.be/~tcoupe/updaterevealedperformances.pdf>
- Kalaitzidakis, Mamuneas, and Stengos (2002) rankings are based on pages published by faculty during 1995-1999 in top-30 journals; the authors' ranking of journals is based on the number of 1998 citations of all articles published 1994-1998. The report is online at: <http://www.econ.ucy.ac.cy/papers/0110.pdf>
- Dusansky and Vernon (1998) rankings are based on the weighted volume of top-quality publications of faculty during 1990-1994. Conroy and Dusansky (1995) rankings are based on a similar methodology and an earlier period.
- Scott and Mitias (1996) rankings are also based on counts of total pages in top journals during 1984-1993.

- U. S. News and World Report (USN&WR).  
<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/phdhum/phdhumindex.htm> While USN&WR publishes rankings annually, it re-ranks only a rotating subset of departments each year. These rankings are based on a poll of department chairs and administrators, but USN&WR is vague on sample size and methods.

The NRC did not rank business Ph.D. programs. Several sources rank MBA programs, but these rankings are less helpful for your search because they reflect things like starting salary of MBA graduates, satisfaction of MBA students with the teaching, and other factors which are only weakly correlated with the quality of the department from the point of view of a junior professor. However, if you are curious, the URLs at which you can find rankings of MBA programs are listed below:

Business Week: <http://www.businessweek.com/bschools/00/>

Economist Intelligence Unit: <http://mba.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=2002rankings>

U.S. News and World Report:

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/mba/mbaindex.htm>

Wall Street Journal: <http://www.careerjournal.com/specialreports/bschoolguide/results.html>

Forbes: <http://www.forbes.com/bschools>

Financial Times:

<http://news.ft.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=FT.com/StoryFT/FullStory&c=StoryFT&cid=1042490958499&p=1012571727085>

Joseph Tracy and Joel Waldfogel: <http://papers.nber.org/papers/W4609.pdf>

Nor do there exist good rankings of public policy departments. The NRC did not rank public policy Ph.D. programs. USN&WR ranks masters degree programs in public affairs, which is unsatisfactory because the quality of a Ph.D. program is a better indicator of the research environment for junior faculty. Access to the complete USN&WR rankings of masters degree programs in public affairs is available only for website subscribers, but a subset of the latest rankings are available for free at:

[http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/pub/pubindex\\_brief.php](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/pub/pubindex_brief.php)

Show your letter-writers the list of jobs for which you plan to apply and ask their advice. Make sure they are aware of the types of jobs you think are the best match and of any restrictions on your search. You might ask if they are able to write a good letter, and if they would be able to write a better letter if you limited your search to certain departments. Give them copies of your CV and cover letter so they can see how you are marketing yourself. Ask your advisors to call any contacts they may have in departments you have identified as a particularly good match and vouch for you. (While such informal contacts can help you get an initial interview, after that you are on your own. Nobody can get the job for you -- you have to perform well in the interviews and in your job talk.) If your committee refuses to make any calls or emails on your behalf, don't worry -- you will still get interviews.

You may want to have more letter-writers than is required. That way, even if one is late, the consideration of your application is not delayed. Stock et al. (2000) found that 13% of interviewing departments treated incomplete files as ineligible for review and that 42% of departments did not notify candidates that their file was incomplete unless the candidate looked promising.

There are two conferences at which you can interview prior to the ASSA meetings. The first is the conference of the Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), usually scheduled in late October or early November; the URL for the 2003 APPAM meetings is:

<http://www.appam.org/conferences/fall/dc03/>

Public policy departments are more likely than economics departments to interview there.

The second is the conference of the Southern Economic Association (SEA), usually scheduled in mid- to late November. The URL for the 2003 SEA meetings is:

<http://www.etnetpubs.com/conferenceprograms/sea/>

As the title of the conference suggests, economics departments in the southern U.S. are more likely than departments from other regions of the U.S. to interview there. The job markets at these two meetings are small relative to that at the ASSA meetings. Stock et al. (2000) found



that, of participants in the economics job market in 1995-96, only 6% of departments and only 11% of applicants participated in interviews at the SEA meetings.

In early September the ASSA sends to AEA members a brochure that includes information on reserving hotel rooms for the conference. Information will also be online at:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/anmt.htm> Make your hotel reservations as early as possible for two reasons. First, hotel choices diminish as the conference nears, so if you wait too long you may be forced to stay in a non-conference hotel far from your interviews. Second, after the cutoff date you will not be listed in the Hotel Directory, which employers can use to contact you during the conference. When making hotel reservations, you may want to ask for a room close to ground level; that way, if elevators are slowed by the huge traffic of job candidates you can take the stairs. Most years, the ASSA reserves an all-suite hotel for interviews; you might want to reserve a room in a hotel near to the all-suite interview hotel, or you might want to reserve a room at the headquarters hotel, which has bulletin boards on which you can look up interview locations using identification codes that will be provided to you by prospective employers.

Plan to arrive a day before your interviews begin so that you can scout hotel locations. This will also help avoid disaster if your flight is delayed. The earliest interviews occur on the arrival date; i.e. the day before the conference sessions begin.

Try to mail your job market packets by November 1. They must arrive by Thanksgiving. Each packet should consist of a cover letter that you have tailored to that particular job and university, your CV, your job market paper, and all other completed papers, especially those that are published. Letters of recommendation may be included in your packet or sent separately. Photocopy your papers double-sided to save on mailing costs. In your cover letter, list the research focus of the search and where you saw the job advertisement. Departments may have multiple searches underway and you want to be sure that your materials are reviewed by the appropriate committee. If you are applying to more than one opening at the same department, you should send as many job market packets as jobs for which you are applying so that your materials can be referred to each search committee. If you are sending multiple papers be sure to

point out which one is your job market paper, both in your cover letter and on the paper's title page. Rarely, a job listing will also request your graduate school transcript. The U.S. Postal Service's Priority Mail system is a good way to send your job market packets: it is relatively fast (around 3 days) and relatively cheap.

If you are targeting teaching institutions in your search, include teaching evaluations in your job market packet. Shively, Woodward, and Stanley (1999) write that the best signal of teaching ability is to have received favorable teaching evaluations for an independently taught course. Applicants who are targeting teaching institutions in their search should seek assistance within their universities in assembling a teaching portfolio that can be sent to prospective employers.

You may receive unsolicited requests for your job market packet. Even if you have already mailed a packet in response to a job advertisement from that department, send another packet to any individual requesting one.

The ASSA brochure advertises the Illinois Skills Match as a job placement service. This service is free but is not a replacement for mailing your job packets. Stock et al. (2000) found that 21% of departments during 1995-96 used the professional placement service at either the ASSA or SEA meetings. The professional placement service is more useful for those seeking jobs in a teaching college or outside academia than for those seeking jobs in a research university.

Likewise, your department's mailing of CVs is not a substitute for a job packet mailing. Stock et al. (2000) found that only about half of hiring departments even review the packets of CVs, and only about 20% reported scheduling an interview on the basis of the CV packet.

By early November at the latest give an electronic mail merge file to the secretaries in charge of mailing your letters of recommendation. You should check with the secretaries periodically to make sure the letters have been mailed. You should be nice to these secretaries because they are performing an important service for you.

For the primary market, expect to get your first requests for interviews in the first week of December and most of them in the second and third weeks of December. However, the variance is large and you may receive requests from before Thanksgiving right up to the ASSA meetings; be sure to check your email and voice mail over the winter holidays.

When you receive a call requesting an interview, make sure that in the course of the conversation you record the following information:

- The name of the person calling
- Their department and institution
- For which position you are being interviewed (the department may be conducting multiple searches)
- The date, time, and length of the interview
- The hotel in which the interview will take place
- How you can find out the exact room in which the interview will take place (Can they give you a disclosure code for the ASSA Room Information Booth? Will you need to call an interviewer during the meetings? Will you need to check a bulletin board in the conference hotel?)
- Which faculty members will be conducting the interview (this information may not yet be available)
- Who is on the search committee (in particular, who is the chair)

As you begin to receive requests for interviews, be respectful of other candidates on the job market. Share information with other candidates but don't flaunt your successes.

**Table 5:**  
**Outcomes for New Economics Ph.D.s**  
**On The Junior Academic Job Market**  
**By Graduate School Ranking**  
**1995-96**

Outcome	Graduate School Ranking According to Scott and Mitias (1996)				
	1-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	>101
Received any interviews	100% (59)	96% (45)	88% (33)	100% (13)	88% (17)
Number of prearranged AEA interviews	11.71 (59)	5.78 (45)	3.21 (33)	3.54 (13)	2.81 (16)
Number of interviews per application	.17 (59)	.10 (45)	.06 (33)	.09 (13)	.08 (16)
Received at least one invitation for campus visit	83% (59)	81% (43)	86% (29)	92% (13)	73% (15)
Number of invitations for campus visits	5.06 (49)	2.63 (35)	2.72 (25)	2.50 (12)	2.82 (11)
Received any job offers	83% (58)	82% (45)	70% (33)	92% (13)	71% (17)
Number of job offers received	2.46 (48)	1.42 (36)	1.43 (23)	1.42 (12)	1.58 (12)
Percentage of offers that were tenure track	56%	49%	36%	12%	40%

Notes: Source: Stock, Alston, and Milkman (2000), Table 7.  
Sample size appears in parentheses below cell value.

Two studies, Stock et al. (2000) and List (2000), yield clues as to how many interviews you should expect. Stock et al. (2000) found that 95% of applicants during 1995-96 had at least one interview; on average, these people had nine interviews. The average number of AEA interviews by graduate school rank is listed in Table 5; candidates from the top 25 departments report more interviews at the AEA meetings than do candidates from lower-ranked departments. List (2000) found in his sample of job seekers at the 1997 ASSA meetings that, of those who had applied for any academic jobs, 20% had no interviews for academic jobs at the ASSA meetings. The mean number of academic interviews for the entire sample was 5.99, with a standard deviation of 6.62. List also finds that a job candidate from a top-19 institution, as ranked by Scott and Mitias (1996), received between 1 and 1.6 more academic interviews than candidates from lesser-ranked departments.

After Thanksgiving, give your advisors frequent updates on your list of interviews. If you aren't getting any calls by the second week of December ask your advisors to email or call on your behalf.

Keep a list of faculty you talk to at each university. Update it after conference interviews and campus visits. When you are visiting campuses in February you want to remember who you have already met.

Should you ever decline an interview? Yes, if you know you would not accept the job. Don't waste your time and theirs. Do not accept interviews solely because you think "it will be good practice." It won't be good practice if it's obviously a bad match.

Interviews at the AEA meetings can last from 30 to 60 minutes. When scheduling interviews, leave a minimum of 15 minutes between interviews so that you can move from room to room and hotel to hotel. You might want to study a map of hotel locations in the convention city and try to schedule interviews in the same hotel in adjacent time slots and leave extra time between interviews that are distant.

There is learning by doing in interviews. For this reason you might want to schedule your most important interviews for the middle of the conference (and the middle of the day), and schedule marginal interviews for the beginning of the conference (and the beginning of the day).

Ask the faculty in your department to conduct mock interviews so you can practice.

Before you depart for the ASSA meetings, have your job talk ready; you may be invited for campus visits immediately after the ASSA meetings.

### **3. Interviewing at the ASSA Meetings**

The vast majority of interviews for economists on the academic job market take place at the Allied Social Science Associations meetings. Prospective employers rent a hotel room or suite into which applicants stream for tightly scheduled 30-60 minute appointments throughout the meetings. Occasionally departments will interview at a table in a ballroom or take you to a meal. Interviews held in small hotel rooms may feel quite crowded, with interviewers perched on beds or leaning against walls. In the course of the ASSA meetings, departments may interview several dozen applicants for each job; the search chair (or entire committee) may sit in on every interview and as a result your interviewers may be more fatigued than you.

Before the meetings, review your interviewers' publication records and research interests. Take careful note of any papers in your area; understand how your work relates to theirs. Also, learn about other members of the department, the department itself, and the University. The internet makes this easy. Know what degrees the department offers and the relevant units on campus. Be prepared for the fact that interviewers may refer to university-specific programs or administrative units using acronyms.

The ASSA maintains a "Job Interview Suite & Room Information Booth" in the conference headquarters hotel. Interviewers may give you a disclosure code when they schedule your interview. At the booth will be posted a list of disclosure codes and the hotel names and room numbers associated with them. Share information on interview locations with other job candidates from your department. If there is a grad student from your department at the meetings who is not on the job market, you could ask that person to determine interview locations for those on the market.

The ASSA meetings will be physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding. Try to minimize the shock by as much as possible keeping to your regular schedule. If you exercise, keep to your usual regimen. If you tend to eat a light breakfast, do the same at the meetings. If you drink the

same tea every morning, you may find it reassuring to bring some with you. Don't overindulge in caffeine; you may not find convenient bathrooms. You will be running between hotels so before each interview glance in a hallway or lobby mirror to make sure that your appearance is neat. If you have a lot of interviews, you may have little time to eat. You must make sure to eat in order to remain responsive, cheerful, and relaxed. Bring granola bars or other portable snacks with you in your briefcase and eat between interviews.

Even though you may not attend any sessions, register for the conference and wear your name tag during interviews.

Occasionally interviewers will be running late and may ask you to stand waiting in the hotel corridor.

Begin the interview by introducing yourself and shaking hands with your interviewers. Interviewers are looking for a good colleague. Make eye contact, smile, and be friendly.

Interviews generally begin with a request that you describe your dissertation. Explain your paper in broad terms. The interviewers may know nothing about your field, so be sure to explain the economic intuition and logic of what you are doing and explain how it is of interest to a wide audience. Rehearse five-minute and one-minute summaries of your job talk paper until they are polished. (However, don't give the impression of reciting from a memorized script -- talk naturally.) The interview is not a seminar -- don't have an introduction, methods section, etc. Don't be afraid to admit the limitations of your work; you don't want to put yourself in the position of defending something that's not defensible.

During each interview, keep in mind the parameters of the search (i.e. the field desired). Be prepared to explain why you are qualified in that field. You might think this is unnecessary; after all, they contacted you for the interview. However, getting the interview merely means that a few people in the department think you are worth talking to; there could still be serious disagreement over whether you are qualified in the field so come prepared to present and defend



your field-specific credentials.

Know where your research fits in the economics literature. Be able to explain how your current work fits into a larger plan for establishing your place in that literature. Have an intellectual discussion in the interview. Be relaxed enough to go with the flow of the conversation; avoid sounding defensive or scripted. Ideally you will show that you are interested in finding the right answer, not just in getting a job or publishing a paper.

Have a mental list of the most important things you want to communicate during the interview. Work these in when conversation lags. If there are reasons that you especially want the job, be sure to mention them. All else equal, recruitment committees want to make offers to people who really want the job and are likely to accept.

After a dozen or so interviews you may forget what you've already said in that particular interview. Pay attention to what you've already said and try not to repeat yourself.

Be prepared for the “big picture” question, which can take several forms; e.g.

- Why is this economics?
- Why is this an interesting question?
- Why should we care about your results?

Have good answers prepared for these big-picture questions; it can be hard to think on your feet of a good and complete answer from scratch. Senator Edward Kennedy's 1980 Presidential campaign collapsed after he couldn't answer the question “Why do you want to be President?” in a televised interview. Be able to justify your thesis.

Following are some other questions you might be asked about your research:

- How did you get the idea for this paper? (Interviewers may be curious if your advisor simply handed you the dissertation idea.)
- To what journal will you send it? In general, what journals do you consider to be the appropriate outlets for your work?

- When will you finish your dissertation? (Employers prefer that candidates successfully defend before the employment start date.)
- Questions about any paper listed on your vita. (Interviewers may want to make sure that your working papers really exist and aren't just ideas.)
- Which senior economists do you wish to emulate? Why?
- Do you plan to continue collaborating with your coauthors/advisors?
- What is your research agenda for the next five years? What are the next three papers you will write?
- Will your research use structural models or a more reduced form approach?
- Do you think you'd be happy in a department like ours? (Especially likely to be asked by interdisciplinary departments.)

It's OK to ask for the motivation behind an interviewer's question, or to ask for clarification. You may be interrupted during your responses; this is normal and you should not panic or get angry. Do not try to dodge questions; to attempt to do so would insult the intelligence of your questioners. Consider all questions seriously and answer them as best you can.

Following are some questions you might hear about teaching:

- What is your teaching experience?
- What would you like to teach? What texts or journal articles would you use to teach those courses?
- How would you teach? What is your teaching philosophy?
- How would you teach to our students (undergraduate / masters / nontraditional / Ph.D. students) in particular?

Following are some other questions interviewers might ask:

- Why are you interested in our school?
- Is the location of our school (rural, regional) a problem?
- Where else are you interviewing?

- How's the market this year?
- What is your greatest strength? What is your greatest weakness?
- Are you on the market jointly with someone else?

Generally, towards the end of the interview time is reserved for you to ask the interviewers questions. Here are some questions you might want to ask:

- Tell me about your department's research environment. In which journals do you want your faculty to publish? Do the faculty coauthor with each other? Is there much interaction across fields within the department? Is there much mentoring of junior faculty by senior faculty? What resources are available to help new faculty develop their research?
- Tell me about your seminar schedule. Are there separate seminars for each field?
- 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 or will I be teaching large introductory classes?
- What is the quality of the graduate students? Where have the best graduate students in your program placed recently? 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?
- 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?

Don't be afraid to refer to a list of questions. Doing so will help you remember to ask the important questions, allow you to keep track of the answers, and it signals to the interviewers that you've done your homework and are taking the interview seriously.

At the end of the interview, be sure to ask whom you should contact if you have any questions and when they plan to make their decisions about campus visits. Some may not make decisions for weeks while others may be calling candidates the next day.

After you exit each interview, try to jot a few notes about your impressions. It will be tempting to skip this if you are pressed for time but this can help you to later to keep each interview distinct.

Bizarre things can occur during interviews. I have heard stories of interviewers becoming ill, saying shocking things, and not taking the interview seriously. If something like this happens, try not to panic but rather roll with the punches and be yourself.

You may have an interview that goes badly, leaving you feeling shaken. You must divorce it from your mind and go to the next interview as relaxed, cheerful, and natural as you were before the bad experience.

Send thank you notes to your interviewers (email is acceptable but handwritten notes make a more positive impression).

#### **4. Campus Visits**

Departments vary greatly in how soon they meet after the ASSA meetings to decide which interviewees to invite for a campus visit. Some departments arrange campus visits at the ASSA meetings, others call just days after, while others wait until the end of January or even the beginning of February. Candidates in whom the department is particularly interested may be invited for a campus visit prior to the ASSA meetings as part of the pre-emptive market. Most departments invite roughly three people per opening for campus visits, so a campus visit indicates that you are a finalist. You will not be informed if you are not going to be invited for a campus visit. If you are getting few or no campus visits by early February, meet with your advisors to discuss the problem and continue to apply for newly posted job openings.

Stock et al. (2000) found that, of interviewees at the AEA meetings, 68% received invitations for campus visits, averaging 3.2 invitations. Table 5 indicates that there is no clear pattern of the probability of a candidate receiving any invitations for campus visits by the ranking of the candidate's graduate school. However, candidates from the top 25 departments reported roughly twice as many invitations for campus visits than did candidates from lower-ranked departments. (Information on the quality of the department inviting the candidate is not reported.)

You should decline an invitation for a campus visit if you know that you would refuse the job offer. Do not accept flyouts solely to increase your exposure. Campus visits can be extremely fatiguing; you don't want to be exhausted by the time you need to make a good impression for the department that is your top choice. Declining campus visits to departments you would never join is also a decent thing to do because departments have limited resources. If you receive many calls for campus visits, schedule your top four or five immediately and ask the others if you can call them in a few weeks to schedule the visit. Later, you can decline the invitation if things are going well.

Try to combine multiple campus visits with a single flight (especially if the flight is cross-

country); you can divide cost of flight between the schools so that everyone benefits from combining the trips. You may be invited to visit a campus that is close to another school that interviewed you but has not yet invited you to visit. It is acceptable to call the recruitment chair to explain that you are still interested in the department and that you'll be in the area for another campus visit so if they're still interested it is an opportunity to share the costs of the trip with the other department. However, do not be pushy.

On your campus visit you will present your job paper in a formal workshop and will meet with faculty and administrators individually or in small groups; you may have little in common with some of them. You will also have at least one dinner with a small group of faculty, which, though informal, is an important part of the vetting process. Teaching institutions may also require candidates to give a sample class lecture in order to evaluate their teaching skills.

Your interaction with potential employers is the first stage in a repeat game. The people with whom you are interviewing will be in the same profession as you for decades. Be courteous and friendly and even if they never make you a job offer they will remember you well. If you are arrogant or abrasive you will make things harder for yourself in the future -- some of your interviewers (yes, even those in poorly-ranked departments) will be refereeing your papers, evaluating your grant applications, and perhaps writing your tenure letters.

During your campus visit, don't be too intimate:

- Don't tease
- Don't flirt, even if you think someone is flirting with you—you're more likely to be hyperaware of little things and to misinterpret.
- Don't touch people in a familiar way (e.g. punching someone's shoulder in a jocular way, putting your arm around the back of someone's chair when you're sitting next to them, touching the person to whom you are talking)
- Don't address people in an overly informal way. Be aware of how people prefer to be addressed; for example, in some instances you should address people as Doctor or

Professor, and even when going by first names be sure you use the right form of the first name; if someone prefers to be called Catherine you don't want to call her Cathy.

- Don't joke around too much -- you're likely to be a little hyperactive because of adrenaline and you may sound shrill or your humor may fall flat. You may be misinterpreted. Politically incorrect jokes are a bad idea; be sensitive to issues of diversity.
- Don't tell personal stories. This is especially true of drinking stories or dating stories.

While you don't want to be too intimate you also don't want to be aloof or stiff or unfriendly. It's a delicate balance. You want to come across as a relaxed and friendly future colleague.

Don't be too quiet. Initiate conversations. Go out of your way to say hi to people who are in your field or who have worked on a similar topic, even if they're not on your schedule; they will expect it.

At the end of your campus visit, ask whom you should contact if you have any questions and when they plan to make their decision. Again, departments differ in their ability to make a quick decision.

Departmental policies for reimbursement vary widely; some departments may have you book your ticket through a university travel office and have the hotel bill them directly so that you don't need to charge anything to your credit card; other departments may ask you to pay out of pocket for travel and hotel and submit the receipts for reimbursement. If you have lots of campus visits scheduled this can quickly exhaust your credit card's limit. Call the credit card company and ask for additional credit before you begin traveling. If you do pay out of pocket, don't forget to get a receipt for your airfare. Submit receipts to departments for reimbursement immediately after each trip is completed; if you wait to submit them you could easily lose the receipts or forget. Photocopy your receipts before submitting them in case the originals are lost.

Send a written thank-you note to the search chair after the campus visit.

The rest of this section on campus visits is divided according to your three activities during the visit: the interviews with individual or small groups of faculty, your job market talk, and the dinner with faculty.

### **a) Campus Visits -- Interviews**

Before departing for your campus visit, request a detailed itinerary of your visit. Visit the department web page and familiarize yourself with each faculty member you are scheduled to meet. In particular, look through their CVs to see if they have ever published in your area. Make notes and list a few things to chat about with each person. Itineraries for job candidates are often fluid, so be flexible and prepared to meet with members of the department who are not on the original schedule.

It is your job to make sure there are no dead times in an interview. Come with enough questions to fill a forty-five minute interview. It is OK to repeat your questions in interviews with different people. People will think that you are not interested in the job if you have no questions. Some interviewers may have been assigned to interview you and will be annoyed if you make it more work for them than it has to be. Bring a list of questions and record the answers; you will signal your preparation and interest. In addition to the questions listed under Section 3, here are other questions you might ask:

- 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?
- 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)?
- 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 kind of courses are you teaching, and how much control did you have over that?
- 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?
- How much committee work have you been assigned?
- Are the faculty happy with the review process? Do the juniors feel like they've been treated fairly in the reviews? What has happened in the last few tenure reviews?
- How do you like living here? Where do the faculty choose to live?

Do not ask about salary. In general, the only time to discuss it is after you have received an offer. Section 5 of this document provides summary statistics of recent salaries. Your more sensitive questions (e.g. about recent tenure cases in the department) should be reserved for private discussions with friendly junior faculty. In general you might want to ask junior faculty an open-ended question like "So, is there anything I should know about the department?"

Don't belittle your own work out of a sense of modesty (or anything else). You should be excited about your work, enjoy it, and take pride in it.

Interviewers are looking for good colleagues and neighbors. Personality concerns can veto appointments, no matter what the other qualities of a candidate.

Academia is gossipy. An interviewer may ask you confidentially, "What's it like working with Professor X?" or "I've heard Professor Y can be hard to deal with." Until you have a degree in

hand and a job contract signed it's unwise to tell anecdotes about your advisors. Even then, you should expect that your comments will be repeated.

### **b) Campus Visits – The Job Talk**

The most valuable asset on the job market is a high-quality, polished job talk. Practice it again and again for different audiences. Draft answers to anticipated questions. Know it well enough that you can make a lot of eye contact instead of reading from overheads. At some point you may become sick of your job talk but maintain your enthusiasm and keep it fresh.

The schedule for visiting job candidates typically reserves 30 minutes for preparation just before the job talk seminar. However, don't count on getting that time – it frequently gets crowded out when you're running late or is converted into one additional interview.

Strive to finish your job talk in the allotted time without rushing. When planning your talk, leave time for interruptions. During the seminar, if there is a major disagreement about facts, and you are concerned about losing too much time, you can say something like: "We should probably talk about this after the workshop, because I had a different impression of the facts ... OK?" This will acknowledge their point without agreeing with it and allow you to proceed with your presentation. As a speaker, being able to control a seminar in a diplomatic way is a difficult and valuable skill. Domowitz (2001) goes so far as to say, regarding your job talk seminar, that "Loss of control = loss of job."

At the beginning of your talk, provide an outline of the talk and quickly summarize your findings. You might be tempted to wait until the end of the seminar to announce your findings, but a seminar isn't a murder mystery in which knowing the ending ruins the show. You want people to know your findings as soon as possible.

Emphasize why your paper is of interest to all economists, not just those in your field. Put your

research in the context of the previous literature, but spend little time critiquing the previous literature. Instead of emphasizing the negative aspects of what others have done, emphasize the positive aspects of what you've done. Make sure that, when you are citing literature, you correctly pronounce authors' names.

There are two media you can use in your job talk: overhead projector slides or PowerPoint. The advantages of using PowerPoint are that you can change your talk up to the last second and it encourages organization. The disadvantages are that some departments may not have an LCD projector (be sure to confirm that ahead of time), and PowerPoint encourages simplification, which may make some people suspicious. No matter which medium you use, make sure that your slides are legible. Do not put up a photocopied table from your dissertation -- it is likely to be illegible. For PowerPoint, a font size of 24 is the minimum. In addition, use few words per slide. There are two books you may want to review to improve your job talk: Thomson (2001) contains a comprehensive guide to the oral presentation of economics research, and Tufte (1983) is a classic reference on the effective presentation of quantitative information via graphs and charts.

As stated above, it is important to come across as a nice person. That said, a little fire in the belly is a good thing. If someone harasses you in a workshop or an interview you don't need to keep a smile plastered to your face; you should stand up for yourself and your work. Uncontrolled outbursts of anger or frustration are always bad. This is a fine line to walk.

Do not try to dodge questions during your job talk; answer them as best you can. When people give you comments, write them down. This serves several purposes: 1) it will help you to remember the critiques of your paper, which will guide your future revisions; 2) it indicates that you are listening to what people are saying; and 3) it can be used to provide closure when there's a disagreement -- you can note the person's complaint, thank them, put down the pad and move on with your talk.

In the course of reading for your dissertation, you should have absorbed enough institutional knowledge about the subject of your job talk paper that you are the foremost expert in the seminar room. Fair or not, if you don't know much institutional knowledge about the area of your job talk paper, people may assume that your work is superficial. For example, if your paper is on food stamps, seminar participants will expect you to know details like eligibility levels, the extent to which food stamp programs vary across states, and how the food stamp program was affected by welfare reform. Institutional knowledge may be especially important in interdisciplinary departments; non-economists cannot evaluate the quality of your economics research, so they may use the depth of your institutional knowledge as a signal of your quality.

In some job talks you will be confronted with a question that you don't handle well. When you return home from the visit, you can email the questioner, remind him or her of the question and provide the best answer that you can craft and conclude by asking if that strikes them as a reasonable answer. In other words, even if you fumble the ball during the job talk, it is still possible to make a good impression by remembering the question and trying to find the right answer.

### **c) Campus Visits – Dinner with Faculty**

Much of the advice in section 3a) Campus Visits – Interviews also applies to the dinner with faculty. The few remaining comments here concern the mechanics of the meal itself.

Brush up on your dining etiquette. Your hosts will take you to a nice restaurant and you may be confronted with issues of etiquette that you rarely face. Know that your bread plate is the one to the left (above your fork), that your glasses are those to the right, and that you start with the outside silverware and work in. Knowing the basic rules can spare you embarrassment. At one recruitment dinner I attended, a bottle of wine came to the table, the candidate picked it up first and filled his wine glass to the brim and then looked on, visibly embarrassed, as everyone else at

the table filled their wine glasses halfway. You don't want to feel embarrassed and out of place when you want to be bonding with your dinner companions.

At dinner, drink what others are drinking (probably wine) but in minimal quantities. Perhaps have one glass of wine that you don't finish. Do not have more than two drinks. Don't order a cocktail like a martini. You may not do or say something stupid every time you're tipsy, but you are more likely to do or say something stupid when you're tipsy.

There may be times during dinner when your hosts will talk amongst themselves about departmental matters. While you might feel ignored, and perhaps anxious that you are a boring dinner companion, don't panic. This happens often and is no reflection on you; just politely listen and participate when it feels natural.

Be polite and courteous to waiters and waitresses. No matter how nice you are to the interviewers, if you are rude to support staff no one will think you're a nice person.

Even if you were invited for a campus visit, you may not be officially notified if another candidate has been offered, and accepted, the job.

## **5. Offers and Negotiating**

In the Stock et al. (2000) sample, 80% of respondents received at least one job offer. Of those that received any, the average number of offers received was 1.8. Table 5 indicates that, of candidates receiving any offers, the average candidate from a top-25 department received one additional offer relative to the average candidate from a lower-ranked department.

If a department makes you an offer, you will likely be notified by a phone call from the search committee chair. Get the offer in writing as soon as possible. A fax of the offer is OK but they should also mail you a signed copy. You should have all aspects of the offer in writing. An oral promise from the chair isn't sufficient because the chair might step down or be replaced.

What might be included in an offer? Aside from salary, it might include summer support (each month of which is equal to a ninth of your nine-month salary), course reductions, research funds, office setup budget, office computer budget, and perhaps a travel budget. Each of these may be negotiable, but you will probably have to have other offers to convince a department to improve their initial offer.

What have market salaries been recently? The Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at the University of Arkansas surveys economics departments to determine what salaries and benefits have recently been offered to new hires; these reports can be found online at

<http://www.uark.edu/depts/cberinfo/aea/>

In Deck et al. (2003), the most recent CBER report, economics departments were asked: "For a new Ph.D. with degree in hand, what DID you offer as a 9-month salary for appointment in the 2002-2003 academic year? If this varied across people, please give an average." The summary statistics associated with survey respondents' answers are listed in Table 6. The average salary offered to new Ph.D.s last year by Ph.D.-granting departments in the sample was \$71,082.

Departments ranked in the top 30 offered on average \$79,369, while the average salary offered by non-Ph.D.-granting departments was considerably lower: \$54,505.

**Table 6:**  
**Salary Offered to New**  
**Ph.D. Hires in Economics, 2002-2003**

	<b>All PhD-granting Institutions</b>	<b>Top 30 Institutions by NRC Ranking</b>	<b>Bachelors and Masters Degree Granting Institutions</b>
Mean	\$71,082	\$79,369	\$54,505
Std. Deviation	\$9,740	\$12,643	\$7,100
Minimum	\$48,000	\$60,000	\$39,000
Maximum	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$65,000
N	44	11	23

Notes:

Source: Deck et al. (2003) p. 22.

Question asked: "For a new Ph.D. with degree-in-hand, what DID you offer as a 9-month salary for appointment in the 2002-03 academic year? If this varied across people, please give an average."

The American Economic Association's Universal Academic Questionnaire is another source of information on recent salaries for new economics Ph.D.s. Each fall, the AEA surveys the chairs of economics departments on the number and salaries of their faculty, by rank. (Academic economists working outside of economics departments are not reflected in this survey.) Since 1999, the summary statistics of these questionnaires have been reported in the *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*. Table 7 lists the average salary of new assistant professors over time; in 2002-03 it was \$74,371 in Ph.D.-granting departments.

Table 7 indicates that average compensation for new economics professors is considerably higher, and average teaching load is considerably lower, in Ph.D.-granting departments than in those that do not grant Ph.D.s. In contrast to the average of \$74,371 that Ph.D.-granting departments paid new assistant professors for teaching an average load of 3.5 courses, departments in which a Bachelors was the highest degree paid \$56,614 for a teaching load of 5.6 courses. Table 7 also indicates that the salaries for new economics Ph.D.s have risen rapidly in the last five years; between 1998-1999 and 2002-2003 average starting salaries rose 29% in Ph.D. institutions, 23% in M.A. institutions, and 34% in B.A. institutions.

**Table 7:  
Employment Conditions  
for New Assistant Professors in Economics  
Holding Ph.D.  
1998-1999 to 2002-2003**

	<b>Year</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Additional Compensation</b>	<b>Teaching Load (Courses / Year)</b>
Ph.D. Institutions	1998-1999	\$57,685 (N=40)	\$15,189 (N=25)	3.6 (N=35)
Ph.D. Institutions	1999-2000	\$59,546 (N=37)	\$18,657 (N=19)	3.5 (N=30)
Ph.D. Institutions	2000-2001	\$67,173 (N=37)	\$27,335 (N=37)	3.5 (N=37)
Ph.D. Institutions	2001-2002	\$69,112 (N=39)	\$19,319 (N=39)	3.6 (N=39)
Ph.D. Institutions	2002-2003	\$74,371 (N=41)	\$25,523 (N=41)	3.5 (N=41)
M. A. Institutions	1998-1999	\$50,769 (N=13)	\$7,152 (N=6)	5.2 (N=11)
M. A. Institutions	1999-2000	\$55,390 (N=10)	\$13,489 (N=7)	5.6 (N=11)
M. A. Institutions	2000-2001	\$52,960 (N=6)	\$18,942 (N=6)	5.5 (N=6)
M. A. Institutions	2001-2002	\$59,091 (N=8)	\$13,815 (N=8)	4.0 (N=8)
M. A. Institutions	2002-2003	\$62,358 (N=8)	\$9,000 (N=8)	4.1 (N=8)
B.A. Institutions	1998-1999	\$42,352 (N=27)	\$7,543 (N=7)	6.0 (N=30)
B.A. Institutions	1999-2000	\$47,411 (N=35)	\$11,686 (N=7)	5.8 (N=38)
B.A. Institutions	2000-2001	\$50,908 (N=39)	\$11,337 (N=39)	5.6 (N=39)
B.A. Institutions	2001-2002	\$57,107 (N=28)	\$10,327 (N=28)	5.4 (N=8)
B.A. Institutions	2002-2003	\$56,614 (N=39)	\$14,436 (N=39)	5.6 (N=39)

Notes:

Sample sizes in parentheses.

Additional Compensation includes guaranteed summer compensation over all years and other compensation of cash value to employees, such as a signing bonus. It does not include fringe benefits, moving expenses, or computers that remain the property of the institution.

Sources: Results of American Economic Association Universal Academic Questionnaire as reported in: Scott and Siegfried (2003, 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999), Tables 3.

Nobody knows in advance what the market salary will be; each year it gets worked out between January and March. There can be tremendous variation in the salaries that are offered.

Departments that have not hired a junior person for a few years may be out of touch and offer appallingly low salaries relative to better-informed departments. Suggestive evidence of what range of salaries you can expect in the coming year comes from the most recent CBER report, which asked: "For a new Ph.D. with degree in hand, what is the 9-month salary you EXPECT to



offer for the 2003-2004 academic year?” The average Ph.D.-granting department expects to offer its new hires \$72,518. Predictably, departments ranked in the top 30 expect to pay more (\$83,150), while those that do not offer Ph.D.s expect to pay considerably less (\$55,717). You might wonder how accurate these expectations prove to be; the CBER report compared expected to actual salaries in 2002-2003 and found that top-30 institutions made actual offers 8.6% higher than they expected, all Ph.D.-granting institutions made actual offers 4.1% above what they expected, and non-Ph.D.-granting institutions made actual offers equal to what they expected.

Your salary will apply to either the nine-month academic year or the twelve-month calendar year. If you are offered a nine-month contract, you can write grants to pay your summer salary. Departments with nine-month contracts differ in how many months of summer support they allow you to take; common policies are 2, 2.5, or 3 months. If you plan to write grants, having the option of getting a third month can be quite valuable. Your job offer may include guaranteed summer support for the first year or two. Information from the CBER report about new hires’ summer salary benefits appears in Table 8. 86% of Ph.D.-granting departments offered last year’s new hires summer salary, for an average of two summers. In contrast, less than a third of non-Ph.D.-granting departments offered their new hires summer salary. (On average, Ph.D.-granting departments offer not only higher salaries but also more generous benefits.)

Information about pension benefits is reported in Table 9. Average teaching reductions are listed in Table 10. Of surveyed Ph.D.-granting departments, 79.5% offered a teaching reduction; of those offering a teaching reduction, the average reduction was 1.1 courses for an average of 1.8 years. In contrast, 34.6% of non-Ph.D.-granting departments offered a teaching reduction; of those offering a teaching reduction, the average reduction was 1.3 courses for an average of 1.4 years.

Departments differ in what counts towards your teaching load. Some departments count helping to coordinate a seminar series as a course while in others such work is part of your departmental service and will not decrease how many courses you must teach. In some departments, teaching a large undergraduate course will count double towards your teaching load while in others it

counts just once. These policies are not well advertised but could have a significant impact on how many courses you teach and how much time you have for research.

Deck et al. (2003) found that moving expenses were paid by 91.4% of responding employers. The purchase of a new office computer was offered by 97.8% of Ph.D.-granting departments and 73.1% of other departments. Only 12.2% of responding departments offered housing allowances.

Maternity leave of at least one semester was offered by 86.1% of responding departments in the Deck et al. (2003) sample, but only 62.5% have a formal policy. Stopping the tenure clock for maternity leave is more common in Ph.D.-granting departments than in other departments. Your plans to have children are private and not appropriate to discuss with employers. If you have questions about the institution's policy on tenure and maternity leave you should search the institution's web page rather than ask interviewers.

**Table 8:**  
**Summer Salary Benefits Offered to New**  
**Ph.D. Hires in Economics, 2002-2003**

	<b>All PhD- granting Institutions</b>	<b>Top 30 Institutions by NRC Ranking</b>	<b>Bachelors and Masters Degree Granting Institutions</b>
Percent Offering Summer Salary	86.4% (N=44)	91.7% (N=12)	30.8% (N=26)
If Yes, Average Number of Summers	2.0 (N=36)	2.1 (N=11)	1.9 (N=7)
Percent of 9-Month Salary Offered	16.2% (N=38)	20.2% (N=11)	10.0% (N=6)

Notes:

Source: Deck et al. (2003) p. 22.

Question asked: "For new instructors or assistant professors hired for the 2002-03 academic year, did you offer summer research support?"

- a. Yes or No
- b. If YES, for how many summers was support offered?
- c. For any summer research support, what percentage of the academic year salary was offered?"

**Table 9:**  
**Pension Plan Benefits of New**  
**Ph.D. Hires in Economics, 2002-2003**

	<b>All PhD- granting Institutions</b>	<b>Top 30 Institutions by NRC Ranking</b>	<b>Bachelors and Masters Degree Granting Institutions</b>
% New Assistant Professor Salary Contributed By University to Pension Plan	10.7% (N=42)	10.1% (N=10)	11.6% (N=24)
% New Assistant Professor Salary Contributed By Employee to Pension Plan	4.0% (N=38)	4.7% (N=9)	4.7% (N=20)

Note:

Source: Deck et al. (2003) p. 23-24.

**Table 10:**  
**Teaching Reductions for New**  
**Ph.D. Hires in Economics, 2002-2003**

	<b>All PhD- granting Institutions</b>	<b>Top 30 Institutions by NRC Ranking</b>	<b>Bachelors and Masters Degree Granting Institutions</b>
Usual Teaching Load: Mean Semester Courses/Year	4.0 (N=44)	3.6 (N=8)	5.2 (N=26)
Offer Reduced Teaching Load? Percent Yes	79.5% (N=442)	88.9% (N=9)	34.6% (N=26)
Mean Courses Reduced	1.1 (N=35)	1.1 (N=10)	1.3 (N=9)
Number Years Reduced	1.8 (N=35)	1.5 (N=10)	1.4 (N=9)

Notes:

Source: Deck et al. (2003) p. 25.

Quarter-system course loads are converted to semester-system course loads.

Salaries of economists in business schools are generally higher than those of economists in other academic units. Stock and Siegfried (2001) found in a survey of new economics Ph.D.s from 1996-97 that the salaries of new hires in business schools were 19% higher than those in other academic units.

The best source of current data on business school salaries is the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) annual survey. In the most recent AACSB survey, 494 participating schools provided data on 25,089 business faculty members across all ranks. Table 11 lists average business school salaries by field for newly hired assistant professors; for economists, the average was \$66,000 in 2002-03. (Note that this is inconsistent with the finding in Stock and Siegfried (2001) of a 19% salary premium for economists in business schools; the

AACSB sample likely contains a larger number of lower-ranked business schools that pay lower salaries.)

**Table 11:  
Average Salary of Newly-Hired  
Assistant Professors  
In Business Schools,  
By Field, 2000-2003**

<b>Business School Faculty Field</b>	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>
Accounting / Taxation	\$83,300	\$86,300	\$90,500
Computer Information Systems / Management Information Systems	\$76,500	\$82,100	\$85,200
Economics / Managerial Economics	\$61,300	\$64,500	\$66,000
Finance / Banking / Real Estate / Insurance	\$88,600	\$95,100	\$96,500
Management / Behavioral Science / International Business / Strategic Management	\$71,900	\$78,100	\$81,700
Marketing	\$74,400	\$81,300	\$84,500
Production / Operations Management	\$75,000	\$86,100	\$86,100
Quantitative Methods / Operations Research / Statistics	\$74,800	\$72,200	\$75,200
Overall average salary of new hires	\$75,400	\$81,100	\$84,100

Note:

Source: Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (2003, 2002, 2001).

Faculty salaries at private universities tend to be higher than those at public universities. Clery and Lee (2001) find that the average salary of assistant professors in all disciplines working in Ph.D.-granting institutions in 1999-2000 was \$50,996 in private universities and \$47,486 in public universities. Hamermesh (2002) finds that faculty salaries grew more rapidly in private than public universities from the early 1980s until the mid-1990s, but that between 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 pay in both sectors grew at the same rate.

All else equal, departmental budgets and hiring are more variable in public than in private institutions. In private institutions, expenditures are usually based on a moving average of endowment income in order to smooth expenditures. Public institutions, on the other hand, can be at the mercy of year-to-year variations in state legislature appropriations -- hiring and raises

may be strongly correlated with the business cycle. One economist described departmental resources in his public university economics department as “Years of famine and then the sugar dump truck pulls up.” Public universities may also be required to publish faculty salaries; knowing the salaries of recent hires may give you a sense of a prospective employer’s willingness to pay.

Talk to other people on the job market to find out what other schools are paying. Don’t be surprised when they won’t tell you.

Salary is important in ways you may not recognize. Contributions to your retirement fund may be a fixed percentage of it. Subsequent annual raises will be a percentage of it. Each month of summer money is equal to a ninth of it. Some schools provide life insurance equal to a multiple of your salary.

Assistant professors in departments with lower probabilities of tenure receive a small salary premium. Ehrenberg, Pieper, and Willis (1998) analyze data from 1974-1981 and find that a reduction in the probability of tenure by 0.1 is associated with a 0.68% higher salary.

Spending more than five years in a Ph.D. program appears to be unrelated to the probability of securing a permanent full-time job (as opposed to either unemployment, a part-time job, or a temporary job). It may, however, be associated with lower salaries among men; see Stock and Siegfried (2001).

There are useful relocation calculators that will help you evaluate the relative attractiveness of different communities. A calculator that allows you to compare the cost of living in different communities of the United States is located at:

<http://www.homefair.com/calc/salcalc.html>

One that allows you to compare crime rates in different communities is located at:

<http://www.homefair.com/calc/crime.html>

Money’s Best Places to Live provides information about weather, crime, housing, education,

health, and other quality of life characteristics in over 300 U. S. cities:

<http://money.cnn.com/best/bplive/>

Departments generally allow a candidate to consider the offer for 10-14 days. Feel free to wait until the deadline, especially if you expect to receive offers from other departments. It is also acceptable to ask for a brief extension to the deadline so you can finish your campus visits. You have the most leverage after the department has made an offer but before you have accepted.

Once you have an offer, call the other departments you visited that could dominate the offer you received and tell them that you're hoping to hear from them soon because you already have an offer. Many departments move slowly and they may need a stimulus like this just to get the recruitment committee to meet. Do not solicit offers from departments that are dominated by the one that made you an offer. If you have not yet completed your campus visits by the time you receive an offer, cancel visits to any departments that are dominated by the offer. Inform the others of your new deadline and, if necessary, reschedule to sometime before your deadline the visits to departments that could dominate your current offer.

Departments are most likely to improve their offer when you have a richer offer from a better department of the same type. A richer offer from a far worse department may not be interpreted as a serious alternative. Economics and public policy departments often do not try to match the higher salaries of business schools. Academic departments are unlikely to match offers from the private sector.

A good book on the subject of negotiating is Fisher, Ury, and Patton (1991). One point of the book is that you must appeal to an objective standard (here, the fair market salary and benefit package) and not give in to pressure from the other side.

What cannot be negotiated? The generosity of the retirement program, life insurance benefits, and any housing subsidy are generally set at the college or university level and cannot be enriched.



Do not be so aggressive in negotiations that you create hard feelings. I have heard faculty darkly muttering about job candidates from years ago who led them on for a month before turning them down, or who asked for so much that the department was outraged. Don't string along departments for your own vanity. Once an offer is dominated, turn it down.

It's possible to be firm and yet still friendly in negotiating. For example, you can say that you're having a hard time making up your mind and you're really hoping that they can do something to make the decision easier.

Talk to junior faculty already in the department to find out what is easiest for the department to provide. Some departments find it easier to increase research funds, others find it easier to increase salary. At some universities, parking is so scarce that departments are angered if you ask for it. At big sports universities, it may be hopeless to ask for basketball or football tickets.

You may ask to have written into your offer letter the number of preps you will have (i.e. different courses you will teach) as an assistant professor. All else equal, you would like to teach fewer courses, as that will mean less time consumed by class preparation and more time for research.

Consider the short-term and long-term benefits of each package. Many offers are front-loaded in that teaching reductions are only for the first semester or that research funds disappear after a year.

Two important inputs to your research will be your fellow faculty and your graduate students. Domowitz (2001) makes the important point that the distribution of quality faculty across departments is less skewed than you think but the distribution of quality graduate students across departments is more skewed than you think.

If you accept a job at a research university, research will determine your success as an academic.

Figure out what you need to be productive (research funds, teaching reductions, etc.) and in negotiations try to improve these factors.

After you have successfully resolved your job search, you may be interested in reading guides for economics junior faculty or about academic economics in general. Daniel Hamermesh has written guides to professional etiquette for junior and senior faculty: Hamermesh (1992, 1993). *A Guide for the Young Economist* (Thomson, 2001) offers advice on writing papers, presenting a research seminar, and refereeing articles. *Publishing Economics: Analyses of the Academic Journal Market in Economics* (Gans, 2000) collects papers that address issues such as the returns to coauthorship, the behavior of economics journal editors, and the relative impacts of economic journals. If you ever feel depressed after receiving a rejection notice, you might feel better after reading *Rejected: Leading Economists Ponder the Publication Process* (Shepherd, 1995), which describes how some classic articles in economics were rejected when initially submitted for publication.

## **6a. Special Topics -- Diversity**

If you are a member of a historically disadvantaged minority group (e.g. African-American, Hispanic, Native American) it is to your advantage to indicate that on your CV; it will increase your chances of being interviewed. You could indicate this information by listing any minority scholarships you have received or your membership in any minority student associations. Typically Asian-Americans and anyone who is not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident is not counted as a historically disadvantaged minority.

The U. S. Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces legislation that bans discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability. While the EEOC forbids employers from discriminating on the basis of these factors, it has varying guidelines as to whether employers may ask applicants about these factors. For example, the EEOC states that questions that tend to disclose race or ethnicity constitute suggestive evidence that race will be unlawfully used as a basis for hiring. On the other hand, the EEOC does not forbid employers from asking applicants about their age. Contrary to popular belief, there is no EEOC list of “forbidden questions” for interviewers. For more information about EEOC regulations, see the EEOC website: <http://www.eeoc.gov/regs/index.html>

Schools may mail self-identification cards on which they request that applicants record their race and ethnicity and return the card to the school. Compliance is voluntary. This information will not be linked to your application or even given to the department, but is recorded by the institution’s affirmative action office.

If English is your second language, prospective employers will evaluate whether your English skills are sufficiently advanced for you to teach successfully at their institution. It is important for you to speak clearly during your interviews and seminar, particularly for departments that heavily emphasize undergraduate teaching. Loveridge (1996) points out that non-native speakers of English may use technically correct but odd phrases in their writing and encourages

such applicants to ask a friend who is a native speaker of English to proofread cover letters. Non-native speakers of English should not despair for their job market prospects; the market for new Ph.D.s in economics is quite international. The 2002 Survey of Earned Doctorates found that 52.5% of those awarded Ph.D.s in economics from U.S. universities during 2001 were non-U.S. citizens with temporary visas (NSF et al., 2002).

The percentage of new economics Ph.D.s, job candidates, and new hires that were female is listed in Table 12. During 1996-2002, slightly over a quarter of new Ph.D.s, and of all job market candidates, were women. The third and fourth rows of Table 12 indicate that during this period, relative to their share of all job market candidates, women tended to be slightly underrepresented among new hires by Ph.D.-granting departments and over-represented among new hires by non-Ph.D. granting departments.

**Table 12:  
Percent of New Economics Ph.D.s, Job Market Candidates,  
And New Hires That Are Female  
1996-2002**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
All Ph.D. Recipients	28.2	27.7	29.6	34.0	28.0	30	27.2
All Job Market Candidates	24.5	25.4	28.4	30.4	25.7	N.A.	N.A.
Initial Job: U.S. Ph.D.-Granting Department	20.2	20.2	24.4	30.5	26.6	30.0	26
Initial Job: U.S. Non-Ph.D.-Granting Department	26.4	35.5	36.9	31.3	35.2	45.0	42
Number of Departments Reporting	98	95	92	77	76	N.A.	83

Notes:

Cell values indicate percent female.

All Ph.D.-granting economics departments in the U.S. were surveyed; the number of departments reporting is listed in the last row.

N.A. indicates that the data are not available.

Sources: Haworth (2003, 2002), Allen (2001), Table 1, and Bartlett (2000), Table 1.

The Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) publishes a

newsletter that includes articles regarding the experiences of female economists in the job market. The CSWEP newsletter is online at: <http://www.cswep.org/newsletter.html>

## **6b. Special Topics -- The Dual Job Search (Spouses)**

At the beginning of your job search, sit down with your spouse or partner and discuss your preferences for locations and jobs, and how you as a couple would handle the range of possible job market outcomes. In particular, determine whether you are willing to live apart, and if so, under what circumstances. These discussions can be difficult, because the answers depend in part on how much each of you is willing to compromise your career for the relationship.

Some interviewers ask about marital status (though many in a roundabout way; for example: Do you have any pets? Who is taking care of them while you're away?). Discuss your marital status if asked.

If your spouse is also an academic, it is in your best interest to reveal this to potential employers sooner rather than later. Many departments and universities have policies and procedures to accommodate academic couples. If an employer does not accommodate academic spouses, this is information that you want to have as soon as possible. Nothing good can come from concealing information about your spouse's job search; your goal on the job market is to find a good match with an employer. If you wait until you have an offer in hand to ask for help with an academic spouse's job search then you have waited too long; even when systems are in place to help with this issue, the process takes weeks.

It is not necessary to describe your dual job search in your letters of application, but you could describe it briefly during your ASSA interview. You can provide the rest of the details on your campus visits. By the time you conclude a campus visit, the prospective employer should understand your preferences and constraints with respect to your "two-body problem."

Academic departments generally cannot find a job for a nonacademic spouse, but they may be able to refer the spouse to local labor market resources.

If your spouse is applying for another academic job at the same university, make sure that both search committees know this. Search committees are aware of the difficulty dual-career spouses have in finding dual job matches, and may jump at the chance to resolve two job searches quickly.

If your spouse has good job prospects in the vicinity of the university to which you are applying, it is in your interest to reveal this information to the search committee. People dislike uncertainty; if the committee knows that the job and area are a good fit for you and your spouse then they will assign a higher expected probability that you will accept the job if offered. Search committees want the offers they make to be accepted, so this may make you a more attractive candidate.

Dual academic career couples enjoy maximum flexibility when they are both on the job market at the same time. If both partners are not at the same stage of graduate studies, the partner who is farther along could consider a postdoc while waiting for the other to finish.

You may find it helpful to read columns in the Chronicle of Higher Education devoted to dual academic career couples. You can search for them in the Chronicle's online Career Network section: <http://chronicle.com/jobs/archive/topical/>

## 7. Summary

Below are the four most important pieces of advice regarding the job market.

- 1) Know where you fit in the discipline of economics; in particular, know:
  - a. In what fields of economics you will specialize
  - b. How your job market paper relates to the literature
  - c. Your comparative advantages as a researcher and teacher
- 2) Success in the job market is finding a good match – from your perspective, a job in which your work is appreciated and in which you can grow and improve.
- 3) Honesty with your advisors and potential employers about your interests, comparative advantages, and any constraints on your search improves your chances of finding a good match.
- 4) The job market is the first period in a repeat game. You will continue to interact with the people you meet on the job market as journal referees, discussants, grant reviewers, and colleagues. Conducting yourself with maturity and integrity on the job market will pay dividends far into the future.



## 8. Glossary of Job Market Terms

**Academia:** Academia was a public garden near Athens where Plato lectured his pupils. The school became known as the Academy and the teachers and pupils as Academics. Today colleges and universities are referred to collectively as academia or the academy, and professors are known as academics.

**Adjunct Professor:** A person whose primary employment is outside the university but is hired to teach specific courses for a limited period of time. One of several non-tenure-track academic appointments; for others, see **instructor**, **lecturer**, and **visiting professor**.

**Allied Social Science Associations (ASSA):** The American Economic Association (AEA) holds annual meetings jointly with other social science associations, e.g. the American Finance Association (AFA), the Industrial Relations Research Association (IRRA), and the Association for Social Economics (ASE). These meetings are collectively called the Meeting of the Allied Social Science Associations. The vast majority of your initial academic job interviews will likely take place at the ASSA meetings, held in early January.

**American Economic Association (AEA):** The professional organization of economists. The annual meeting is held in early January as part of the Meeting of the ASSA. The AEA website is <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/index.htm> Student membership in the AEA is available at bargain rates and includes membership to three journals: the American Economic Review, the Journal of Economic Perspectives, and the Journal of Economic Literature.

**Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM):** The professional organization of academics working in the area of public policy. They hold their annual meeting at the end of October or beginning of November. The APPAM website <http://www.appam.org/services/jobbank/pos/> contains job listings. You may post your CV on the APPAM website. Interviews at the APPAM meetings tend to be less formal than those at the

ASSA meetings.

**Assistant Professor:** The lowest of three tenure-track or tenured faculty positions. Your first tenure-track job will almost certainly be at the assistant professor level. Progress of assistant professors toward tenure is generally assessed in a third-year review; failure to make acceptable progress can result in non-renewal of the employment contract. In the vast majority of cases, after the third-year review the assistant professor is told to publish more and work harder and is granted a second three-year contract. Assistant professors in most departments have a six-year review at which they are considered for promotion to associate professor. The salaries of assistant professors are driven by three things: 1) the salary at which one was hired, which is determined largely by the market-clearing salary for that year and the presence of alternative offers; 2) annual raises, which are usually a few percent per year; and 3) raises in response to outside offers of employment. Assistant professors may not be allowed to vote on certain issues during faculty meetings, such as a tenure review; university policy varies.

**Associate Professor:** the middle rank of the three tenure-track or tenured faculty positions. Generally one is promoted to associate professor after spending several years as an assistant professor and passing muster in a review. There are associate professors with tenure and associate professors without tenure; university policy varies. The length of time one must serve as an associate professor before being considered for professor may be left vague.

**Campus Visit:** see Flyout.

**Carnegie Classification:** A typology of American colleges and universities developed by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. Institutions are divided into categories such as Extensive Doctoral/Research Universities, Intensive Doctoral/Research Universities, Masters Colleges and Universities, Baccalaureate Colleges, Associates Colleges, Specialized Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities. Universities may tout their status as an Extensive Doctoral Research University as evidence of the university's commitment to graduate education.

**Chair:** 1) Abbreviation for chairperson, as in “She is the chair of the economics department,” or “She is the chair of the search committee.” 2) Abbreviation for endowed chair, as in “She has a chair in the economics department.”

**Committee Work:** Departmental administrative service. Different types of committees on which you may be asked to serve include: search (for new faculty), admissions, curriculum, and benefits. Departments should try to minimize the amount of committee work given to assistant professors so that they have a better chance of publishing the research necessary to pass the tenure review.

**Cover letter:** a letter sent as part of your application for a job. The letter should politely request an interview, list the reasons that you believe that you are a good match for that particular job, list enclosures (such as research papers and your curriculum vitae) and provide your contact information.

**Curriculum Vitae:** In Latin, it means “course of life” but in the context of the job market refers to a resume tailored for academic jobs. It should list your contact information and details about your education, employment, publications, research experience, and teaching experience. The term curriculum vitae is often abbreviated either CV or c.v. There is a widespread but mistaken notion that vita is singular and vitae is plural; in fact, vitae is correct for both the singular and plural.

**Dead Wood:** slang for faculty who do not contribute to the productivity of the department but who cannot be easily removed because they have tenure. Often a relative term used to refer to colleagues who have been in the department ten years longer than the speaker.

**Dean:** a university administrator with power over department chairs but lesser in rank than the provost. Deans often have control over the number of lines assigned to each department and can veto the tenure recommendations of departments.

**Dual Job Search:** a search that is conducted jointly by two people, e.g. a husband and wife.

Dual job searches can be especially difficult and stressful, which is why they are called the two-body problem.

**Emeritus:** an honorary title awarded to retired faculty. Typically emeriti are given an office, library privileges, and the right to participate in commencement but do not remain voting members of the faculty.

**Endowed Chair:** A faculty line that has been endowed with outside funds that provide for salary and often research support. Given these extra perks, endowed chairs are generally awarded to particularly distinguished faculty and are used to recruit prestigious senior faculty from other universities. Endowed chairs are often named for the source of their endowment; for this reason you may see senior faculty referred to as, e.g., the Jane Doe Distinguished Professor in Economics.

**Flyout:** an invitation to visit the campus, meet faculty, and give a job talk. Generally occur after the initial interviews at the ASSA meetings and only the top few candidates are initially invited. Also called a campus visit.

**Hard Money:** A salary offer is hard money if it is guaranteed even if the faculty member never receives any outside grants. This is in contrast to **soft money**. Most offers in economics departments are hard money.

**Instructor:** Instructor is one of several non-tenure-track academic appointments; for others, see **adjunct professor**, **lecturer**, and **visiting professor**. Often instructor refers to someone who teaches a class but does not have a Ph.D.; for example, a graduate student.

**Job Openings for Economists (JOE):** The primary list of academic job openings in economics and related fields. A publication of the AEA and the economics department at the University of Texas at Austin, JOE is published every month except January and July. Each issue is released

around the fifth day of the month. The website is located at: <http://www.aeaweb.org/joe/>

**Job Talk:** A formal 60- or 90-minute presentation of your research for the purpose of allowing prospective employers to gauge several things: the quality of your research, your communication skills, and your ability to think on your feet. The atmosphere of a job talk varies greatly depending on the department's culture; faculty may sit attentively to hear an entire presentation before asking polite questions or may interrupt immediately with aggressive challenges.

**Joint Appointment:** the state of having appointments in multiple academic units of a college or university. If you are offered a joint appointment, ascertain which department is the primary appointment (i.e. in which department is the line) -- that department would have the most influence over your reviews. For an appointment joint between units with different objective functions, the appointee may find it difficult to satisfy all the stakeholders.

**Junior Faculty:** faculty without tenure; i.e. assistant professors and untenured associate professors.

**Land-Grant Institution:** a college or university designated by its state legislature or the U. S. Congress to receive funds under one of three pieces of legislation designed to increase the efficiency of agricultural production and educate farmers and rural populations. Those three such pieces of legislation are:

- 1) The Morrill Act of 1862, which gave 17.5 million acres of federal land to the states. Most of this land was sold by the states and the income was used to support the land-grant colleges and universities.
- 2) The Morrill Act of 1890, which required states that maintained separate colleges for blacks and whites to equitably divide the funds received under the 1862 Act; this caused the creation of 16 black land-grant colleges in the southern U. S.
- 3) The National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Act of 1994, which conferred land-grant status on 29 Native American colleges.

The mission of land grant institutions was expanded by two pieces of legislation: the Hatch Act

of 1887, which supports agricultural experiment stations, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which supports extension efforts in agriculture and home economics. There are currently 105 land-grant institutions. For some people, the term “land-grant institution” has less than positive connotations; the reason is that many states used the land-grant legislation to start new agricultural universities that were not as strong in classical education as older universities. Today the land-grant institutions are diverse, including institutions with highly ranked economics departments, such as University of California-Berkeley, Cornell, University of Maryland-College Park, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Lecturer:** Lecturers generally teach significantly more, but are paid significantly less, than assistant professors. Lecturers tend to have little job security; they are not tenure-track, their contracts are generally for a single year, renewable at the discretion of the department, and they rarely are promoted to assistant professor. Whereas instructor refers to someone teaching a class who does not hold a Ph.D., the term lecturer is usually reserved for a teacher with a Ph.D. Lecturer is one of several non-tenure-track academic appointments; for others, see **adjunct professor**, **instructor**, and **visiting professor**.

**Line:** a funded slot for a faculty member within an academic unit. For example, you might be told that a position is joint between economics, public policy, and business, but that the line is in the business school. Before accepting a job you should know in which department the line is located; that department will have the most power over your tenure review. Lines are often associated with a salary range, and to accommodate faculty at higher salaries, lines might be combined. Lines can also be left open and the freed salary used to hire multiple lecturers to fill teaching needs. The provost and dean determine how many lines are assigned to each department. When a department is operating at less than full strength it will have fewer faculty than lines; you might want to ask during interviews how many lines are in the department. Sometimes departments refer to a line by its former occupant, as in “Professor X is in Jane Doe’s line,” or “We still have to hire someone in the Jane Doe line.”

**National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER):** A nonprofit nationwide organization of roughly 600 economists with offices in Cambridge, New York, and Palo Alto. On its website at <http://www.nber.org/candidates/> the NBER lists links to the job placement web pages for the major economics departments in the U.S.

**Nine-Month Contract:** A faculty contract in which the salary covers nine months of the year, and the faculty member may write for outside grants to provide summer salary. Most appointments in economics departments are on nine-month contracts.

**Postdoc:** abbreviation for postdoctoral fellowship or a person on such a fellowship. Postdoctoral fellowships support one to three years of full-time research after one has completed one's dissertation. In the life sciences almost all Ph.D.s complete postdocs before starting as assistant professors. Fewer Ph.D.s in economics than in the life sciences do postdocs but the practice has become more common over time. A postdoc is a useful way of getting your research agenda underway before teaching. Salary for postdocs is usually significantly less than that for assistant professors. Some postdocs are formal programs sponsored year after year by organizations (e.g. the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute on Child Health and Human Development) whereas others are ad hoc -- for example, a professor might hire a postdoc to help with a specific project. Some postdocs fund you to do your own research whereas others make you a full-time worker on a project of the employer's design.

**Preps:** slang for class preparations. For example, if you are teaching two sections of the same course, you only have one prep, but if you are teaching two different courses at the same time you have two preps. All else equal, assistant professors want to minimize preps in order to leave more time for research.

**Professor:** the highest-ranking of the three tenure-track or tenured faculty positions; to distinguish them from assistant and associate professors, they are sometimes called full professors.

**Provost:** a high-ranking university administrator who oversees the academic mission of the university. Provosts usually have final say in tenure reviews and also control the number of lines in each academic unit.

**Review:** a formal meeting of the departmental faculty to assess the progress of faculty members in terms of research, teaching, and committee work. The **tenure review** is the most important. Prior to the tenure review, junior faculty may be evaluated each year or just once in a third-year review.

**Sabbatical:** A period of paid leave from teaching, advising, and committee work in order to pursue scholarly goals, often away from the university. Typically consists of one semester at full pay or one year at half pay, every six years. This tradition has roots in the Old Testament injunction to let land lay fallow every seven years in order to allow the land to regain its fecundity; likewise, the sabbatical should be a break from your usual duties that increases your productivity upon your return. The word sabbatical refers to the fact that the seventh year of fallow agriculture is analogous to the seventh day of rest (the Sabbath) dictated in the Ten Commandments. Some believe that it is important to leave the university town for one's sabbatical, to avoid being sucked back into the committee work and advising from which one is on leave. A person on sabbatical is a sabbaticant. The noun form is sabbatical; i.e. "He is on sabbatical." The adjective is sabbatic; i.e. "She is on sabbatic leave." At some institutions one is eligible for a sabbatical only after one has tenure.

**Search Committee:** A group of faculty delegated the task of reviewing applications and interviewing prospective applicants. Policy varies, but many search committees pick the finalists to invite to campus, after which the entire faculty will decide to whom to make an offer. The search committee chair is the ultimate arbiter within the committee; you should know who is the search committee chair at each department you have a campus visit.

**Senior Faculty:** faculty with tenure; i.e. professors and tenured associate professors.



**Soft Money:** A salary offer is considered to be soft money if the faculty member is eventually expected to raise a significant fraction of the salary through outside grants. Few economics departments have soft money positions, but they are common in schools of public health and in certain think tanks. See **hard money** for a contrast.

**Start-Up Package:** a set of benefits offered to new faculty to help them settle in the new department and jump-start their research agendas. It may include a research budget and a reduction in teaching load for the first year.

**Summer Money / Summer Support:** If you have a nine-month contract, you may apply for grants to pay your summer salary. Often departments will offer summer money to new hires; for example, they might offer a month of summer support for each of the first two summers. A month of summer money is equal to one-ninth of the salary on your nine-month contract. Those with twelve-month contracts are generally not eligible for summer support.

**Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF):** A financial services company that administers defined-contribution retirement accounts for many universities and colleges. Contributions by the faculty member and institutions are portable, so faculty aren't faced with the problem of "golden handcuffs" -- being forced to stay at an institution because their retirement savings would be lost if they left.

**Teaching Load:** how many courses a faculty member is required to teach in an academic year. For example, someone required to teach two courses in the fall semester and two in the spring semester might say that he has a "two-two" teaching load. Departments usually reduce the teaching load by one course during an assistant professor's first year.

**Tenure:** it means less than you may think. You have probably heard that tenure means a job for life. Wrong -- usually tenure is with the department, not the university, so if the university sees a lot of dead wood in a department, it can simply eliminate the entire department and then even the tenured faculty are out of work (this happened to the School of Education at the University of

Chicago and the Sociology Department at Washington University of St. Louis). A department cannot fire a tenured faculty member, but it could make him so uncomfortable or miserable that he retires or quits. Your goal as an assistant professor is not to gain tenure at your current institution; it is to develop a national reputation for high-quality research -- which will ensure you tenure somewhere in the discipline. A senior faculty member in my department points out that tenure should not be your career goal but rather a natural result of your research agenda.

**Tenure Clock:** the length of time (between 6 and 12 years) one spends as a tenure-track faculty member before being considered for tenure.

**Tenure Review:** the process of deciding whether to tenure a junior faculty member. The tenure review is based on several factors, including success in research (measured by publications in respected journals and receipt of peer-reviewed grants), success in teaching, and how well the faculty member is regarded by outside letter writers. Often the candidate submits a list of suggested letter writers, to which the tenure review committee, the dean, and the provost add additional names. Tenure letters are in some cases a matter of public record, and even if they aren't, the proceedings of tenure review committees may not be kept secret in practice, so some people who would write negative tenure letters may simply decline, claiming that they're too busy. As a result, tenure review committees may interpret refusals as a signal that the candidate is of poor quality. After receiving reports from letter-writers, the department votes on whether to approve the candidate for tenure. If the department affirms, the dean will decide whether to approve the vote, and then the provost has final say. In some cases, a university-wide review committee advises the provost. The decisions of the dean and provost are not rubber stamps; it is not uncommon for people who received unanimous votes for tenure by their departments to be vetoed. Typically, junior faculty who are refused tenure are allowed to stay for one year after their tenure review. After that year, however, junior faculty denied tenure must depart for employment elsewhere.

**Tenure Track:** description of an academic job that is either tenured or is untenured with a promise of tenure review after a certain period of time. Professor, associate professor, and

assistant professor are tenure track academic appointments. Adjunct professor, instructor, lecturer, and visiting professor are non-tenure track appointments.

**Twelve-Month Contract:** A salary that covers all twelve months of the year. One implication of this type of contract is that you generally cannot supplement your salary through summer money. For contrast see Nine-Month Contract.

**Visiting Professor:** A non-tenure-track academic position, usually for a single year, often filled by academics who have tenure or are tenure-track at another university. There are several distinct markets for visiting positions. One consists of people who lack (but seek) a tenure-track assistant professor position. Such people are hired for fixed terms as visiting professors to fill teaching needs. Positions such as these are often advertised in J.O.E. or the Chronicle of Higher Education. Initial interviews may be done over the phone, as this is usually part of the Secondary Market that begins after the ASSA meetings; that is, hiring departments wait for the market for permanent positions to partially clear before interviewing candidates for a temporary position.

A second visiting professor market consists of assistant professors who are testing the waters in advance of their tenure review. They visit another university to work with collaborators and get a sense of their market value and fit with another department. These visiting positions may be advertised but are often arranged informally. A third visiting professor market consists of tenured faculty on sabbatic leave. Such visiting professors have their own funding (through their department and/or grants) but may teach to supplement their sabbatic pay. These visiting professorships are arranged informally with friends or collaborators. There are no advertisements in this market, given its informality.

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