

Job Market Notes

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This document is a set of notes I collected from my experience on the job market during the 2023-24 job market cycle. I applied to all kinds of US-based jobs (academic, post-doc, government, and private sector), so I know my experience will not apply to everyone. That said, being on the job market is in many ways an entirely distinct monster from the rest of the PhD process, and so I want to offer what I've learned from my job market mistakes and successes as help for anyone for whom it may be a benefit.

My aim is to highlight things that I feel weren't necessarily obvious or said out loud very often. Feel free to use or ignore as much of this as makes sense in your situation.

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When Should I Start Preparing for the Job Market?

- Knowing when to prepare means knowing what you need to be ready. The main focus you should have to be prepared for the job market is **to have the best draft of your job market paper (JMP) ready to submit for job applications when you start applying**. To get there, it involves intentionality with your schedule well in advance of the job market, failures and successes in your research, and a process of receiving and implementing feedback that you don't want to rush if you don't have to. In the steps below, I'll try to articulate how I think you can get there.
- Saying this with the caveat that I am an idiot (so listen to your advisors first and foremost): I think the ideal timeline is **to spend the academic year before your job market year** working primarily on the project that you and your advisors believe will be your JMP. If you are graduating in 5 years, I'm referring to your 4th year. If in 6 years, your 5th year.

- I'm assuming here that you have identified what your JMP topic will be, or at least are "in the ballpark" of what it will be. It's obviously easy to say "you should work on your JMP" if you have an idea of what it will be. There is always a degree of uncertainty with research, depending on how a project unfolds. That's why accounting for the time it takes to try out a research topic and determine if it's good enough for a JMP or not is best case scenario!
 - Even still, you may be in a place where you don't have a JMP topic and you may not even be sure how many years it will take for you to graduate. I hope my notes read as suggestions for timelines that make the job market as ideal and as easy as possible, not as requirements for having a successful job market.
- When I say working primarily, I don't mean you shouldn't work on other projects that might turn into publications or other chapters of your dissertation. These are important, but **your JMP should be your best work, the one with the most potential for "future you" to turn into a series of publications**. This is what employers are looking at the most, typically. Pulling off your JMP will likely require a lot of investigation upfront, running and re-running code, hours on hours of running scripts and debugging, failures and mistakes, rethinking, reworking, etc. That's all very normal and actually important for having the best version of your JMP by the end. You want to allocate as much time to this process as you realistically can so that you can have a balanced workflow and avoid burnout.
- As you are working on your JMP, you want **as much feedback as possible** on what you are doing in every stage of the process. Getting feedback is like an incubator that accelerates the process of learning from your failures, which is crucial for success. Obviously, getting feedback from your advisors is the most important thing, but I'm mostly talking about others here. As soon as you can, and as early as you can, **start looking for opportunities to present your work** both internally (workshops, seminars) and externally (conferences). Also, don't underestimate the power of a coffee and a chat with your PhD colleagues and faculty mentors!
- As you finish up the academic year prior to going on the market, I would shoot to **have a first draft of your JMP by mid to late spring semester (March through May)**. That's early if you are prepping for the market the following academic year, but shoot for it if you can. Having a draft of your work early will be helpful to you, because once it exists, everything changes. You now can start to get better feedback than ever before and iterate on it as the foundation. Anticipate the creation of your first draft to take longer than you initially allocate time for. **Your first draft will certainly not be your last**, but the more polished a draft, the better your advisors will be able to see your vision and what it will take to get to the next level.
- **The end of the spring semester of the year prior to your job market year** marks a time where **I believe the job market preparation process truly begins**. For most of us, this is when our department appointments end, and we finally have the time over the summer to process feedback, finish the bulk of the JMP, and prepare materials for the application process. For me being on the market in the 2023-24 cycle, from May 2023 on through the entirety of the job market application/interview/acceptance process in early 2024, I felt like I was "all in" during this time period. You may have other commitments (i.e., internships) that make your scenario different, and that's okay too. Depending on where you are with your

research and your career goals, find ways to put your best work into job market prep during this time.

- I think best case scenario is to **shoot for a final draft of your JMP to be ready around the beginning of the fall semester of the year you are on the market**. The true deadline for your final draft of your JMP isn't really until you start applying for jobs, because by then you want a stable version of what you are circulating. But if you can get your draft this early, it will be much easier to pivot toward submitting job applications and accomplish other elements of job market prep that I'll discuss below.
- Last thing: everyone's process leading up to the market is different. Don't worry if you don't accomplish things according to your ideal timeline or your peers'. Remember, the main goal is that you **want to get as much feedback on your JMP work implemented and accounted for before you hit the market**. If your timeline changes, keep the big picture in mind, and it will allow you to make the right decisions on what's best for you.

Preparing for the Job Market: Conferences

- Going to conferences is extremely beneficial, but I feel that the benefits of doing so are either unclear or underrated to many of us. I think **you should aim to present your JMP work leading up to and/or during your job market year**. The main benefit is the feedback you will receive from discussant and audience participation to either implement (if good) or anticipate from others (if not feasible). Also, the opportunity to meet other PhD students and junior/senior faculty working on related research has so many positive spillovers, such as future co-authorship, research ideas you didn't consider, someone on a job search committee recognizing your name from a conference, etc. It's also fun!
- A conference experience can be underwhelming if you just present and leave. It can be especially tempting to skip out on sessions if you are anxious about awkwardly meeting new people OR if you're too tired. The payoff of going to any given session is pretty high: you could always come away with a new research idea or future co-author. Ideally, at a given conference, you should hit some sessions related to your research interests and try to meet others throughout the time you're there. That said, even if you end up just presenting and leaving, presenting at a conference at least gives you another rep of talking about your research, and every single rep is helpful for the job market and your future.
- To apply to present at a conference, an abstract is what is usually needed to submit, and if a draft is requested, it will usually be right before the conference, **so don't worry about having a perfectly polished product before submitting**. In fact, use the conference deadlines as commitment devices to make progress, summarize your current project status, and visualize what's left to do!
- Conference presentations themselves are usually short: 15-20 minutes max. This is great practice for finding ways to succinctly describe your work and its relevance, which is a skill you need for when you hit the job market. I get the sense that clearly describing one's research while also being mindful of time limits is unusual skill, only obtained through lots of practice; if you can become good at this, it will be advantageous to you in many ways. Not only is it a signal you've had a lot of experience presenting your work, it's also easier for others to digest your work as well.

- In many cases, especially regional economic conferences, if you are accepted as a presenter, **you are also assigned to be a discussant for a presentation.** (This isn't always the case, so also look for discussant opportunities as an alternative opportunity to go and network with others if you don't get your work accepted.) If you've been to a conference before just to consume research, you probably have an idea of how to be a good discussant. However, if you haven't, it might feel intimidating to be a discussant, so here's some thoughts. Usually you have about 5-8 minutes, so here's the basic structure I like to have: **a quick overview** of the research everyone just heard presented (you'll be given the paper in advance), maybe **a key result** from the presentation you see as the main takeaway, then pivot to **strengths** of the paper in the form of contributions. Then, after all this, you bring in **areas where you think the research can be improved.** Then, say it was a pleasure to read the paper and that you look forward to the Q&A/future work from this research/etc.
 - What's a **bad discussant look like?** This is my subjective opinion, but a few things I'd avoid:
 - Bad discussants try to talk only about weaknesses of the research or try to bring in improvements way too early in their discussion. Don't be mean; you're criticizing a work in progress and it's possible you've vastly misunderstood something when you read it anyway.
 - Bad discussants also just list out negative feedback about the material they've been given, like a stream-of-consciousness review (e.g., a wall of 6pt-size text on a slide titled "Areas of Improvement" where each bullet point is like "Didn't understand Figure 3 on pg. 12"). This is hardly helpful to the author/presenter and really annoying to listen to as an audience member (you're the *discussant*, so you're supposed to help create a good Q&A to follow, not be a lazy reviewer). Avoid this; **synthesize** your suggestions for the paper into broad areas of improvement!
 - Bad discussants don't use slides. Some old-school people will try to get away with taking notes on the plane or even during the presentation itself, and then just standing up and reading off of handwritten comments. This is so hard to follow, and I've never found this kind of contribution to be better than if we just go directly to Q&A with no discussant. Use slides.
- It's more common in other fields, but **presenting a poster can be a great experience too.** At least consider checking this box when submitting for conferences. Printing and traveling with posters requires more planning in advance. For instance, the library at IU has a printer service where you can print academic posters of custom size. You can use something simple like Microsoft Powerpoint to design it and then print on campus (do the more expensive paper, trust me). Buy an adjustable-size poster tube to protect it while traveling; you can fly with this by sticking it in a special closet on the plane that a flight attendant will point you toward if you ask.
- The regional economic conferences are great. If you're able to write a draft of your JMP abstract by October or November, these are usually when the deadlines for the Eastern Economic Association (EEA) and Midwest Economic Association (MEA) conferences are. Deadlines for the Western Economic Association International (WEAI) conference are around the end of the calendar year, and the deadline for the Southern Economic

Association (SEA) meeting is usually in the late spring. Each of these conferences are fruitful avenues for making lasting connections and getting feedback.

- It's also worth trying to submit to the annual conference in your field. For instance, the deadline for the American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) meeting is in late November and the meeting itself is in June. For me, I was able to present my JMP in early summer right before I went on the market. I got invaluable feedback and was able to network with the scholars in my field doing related work right before I hit the job market. If I hadn't gotten accepted, I would have gone anyway and looked to sign up as a discussant for these same benefits. If the big conference in your respective field is like this, you should really shoot to participate in whatever way you can.
- **The costs associated with going to conferences can be non-negligible, especially as a grad student.** There are sometimes department awards for travel, and getting colleagues to go together and split a room can help! Advisors may also have creative solutions for certain conference costs. I've stayed in Airbnbs with students from different departments and universities at various conferences that were funded in part by faculty to help.
- If it's a conference that you imagine certain scholars in your field will be at, consider reaching out via email to schedule a coffee meetup between sessions. Think of this like an office hour for a visiting seminar presenter; you can discuss your JMP research and ask for guidance when on the job market or other questions. Worst case scenario is that they turn you down or ignore your email, but depending on how you word your email, most scholars will be flattered you reached out and are happy to give some time to meet if they are attending. Don't be afraid to ask your advisor to assist in terms of introductions if necessary!
- **Get a presentation clicker.** You can get one for cheap off Amazon, and it's extremely nice to have handy at conferences for presenting and discussing. Also, you can be the person with the clicker who saves the day when the person chairing the session forgets theirs in their hotel room. Small things count.
- I'll mention more about advertising yourself in a later section, but **consider printing some business cards** to take with you to conferences. Some people have them, some don't, so don't stress out about it. But it's really nice to have someone's name printed on a card with contact info after meeting them in passing. I used Canva to design and print a stack of 100 cards and ship them to me for exactly \$20.
- Looking for an alternative way to share yourself that's easy to make and free? **Consider making a QR code with a link leading to your website** that you save on your phone and show to others. You could also combine forces and print it on a business card for others to scan quickly. QR codes are nice options for germ concerns in a post-March 2020 world.

Preparing for the Job Market: Writing Groups

- One key part of my job market prep journey was participating in writing groups with other PhD students going on the market. **I highly recommend finding others who are going on the market and organizing this.** The main writing group I participated in was in our department. It started out of an informal conversation at the end of the spring semester about staying on top of things over the summer before our job market year. Just a few of us who knew we were going on the market decided to meet weekly and discuss everything

from working on our JMPs to research pitches to crafting application materials. This group provided a way to pool resources, a commitment device to stay on track, and a sense of community through what can be a grueling and isolating experience. Don't do this alone!

- Don't forget that as an economics PhD candidate, your friends in adjacent fields going on the market are in similar positions. For instance, reach back out to your math camp friends in other fields that are going to be on the market to see if they want to participate too. Extra insight is always helpful!
- There are many ways that a writing group can be successful; figure out what you need from it. I was also briefly involved in a writing group with various PhD candidates and faculty working in health policy where we did JMP draft submissions with mock reviewer feedback from participating faculty followed by subsequent draft revisions. However many students and faculty might be involved, there are always ways to make writing groups work to help your JMP and your timeline.

Preparing for the Job Market: Job Documents

- Aside from your actual JMP, there are a set of documents that job postings typically will request of you when applying for jobs. The main ones I will mention here are the following: your **cover letter, CV, resume, research statement, teaching statement, evidence of teaching effectiveness, diversity/equity/inclusion (DEI) statement, and letters of recommendation.**
- Because these documents are so commonly requested, you can work on them well in advance of actually applying for jobs, and **I'd start working on these the summer before you go on the job market if possible.** My recommendation is to ask peers who just graduated with jobs for templates/examples of their documents at the end of the spring semester, and their examples will be more helpful if they are closer in nature to your research profile or career interests. I'd also recommend [The Professor Is In by Karen Kelsky](#) as a resource for thinking generally about each of these documents.
- **Cover letter:** I think there is a controversy about how much this document matters. For instance, an employer that ended up giving me an offer told me that they never looked at my cover letter (or anyone else's). Personally, I found it a dominant strategy to treat every cover letter as if the committees cared highly about them, just in case they actually did. They have a structure to them: address to the committee about the position, one to three paragraphs on your research and works in progress, a paragraph or two on teaching, and a concluding paragraph where you summarize your potential fit. This is where you can signal things like location preferences. **This is the one document that should have job-specific wording.** I would have a few versions of your cover letter for each job type (academic tenure-track AP, academic lecturer/teaching, non-academic industry, non-academic government, etc.), and then I would adjust things like institution/organization name for each application. My understanding is that for those hiring committees who do read them, the cover letter should be typed on electronic department letterhead (based on every example from recently graduated colleagues I ever saw alongside what resources like The Professor Is In say). I've also heard your cover letter shouldn't go over two pages, and your (actual, scanned) signature should be at the bottom of it.

- **Curriculum Vitae:** Hopefully, you've been gradually updating this document throughout your PhD so this one is not so difficult. Whether you have or haven't, my recommendation is to check out the CVs from job market candidates at top schools and use their format as a template. One thing that wasn't super obvious to me is including your dissertation committee on your CV (or at least your letter writers). When on the market as a newly-minted PhD, it does seem that this is an important thing to include on the document. I'd also put the abstract of at least your JMP on your CV. Don't forget funding awards or conference presentations if you have them! Also, be sure to include your citizenship status and proper contact information.
- **Resume:** It's possible you may only apply to academic jobs, which typically only ask for a CV. If you apply to non-academic jobs, they may request a resume instead of a CV. A resume differs from your CV in a few key ways, which you may already know. My highlights: first, it should be shorter; one-pagers are ideal. Second, it's more of a summary than an exhaustive list; usually you have an objective/intro summary section, a skills section, and selected research projects and work experience with bulleted lists of what you did to explain your skills. On your resume, it's important to have defined start/end dates for your work and education experience. Employers specifically request that.
- **Research statement:** I think the best strategy for this document and other statements is to get a few templates from recently graduated colleagues and get a sense of what the structure in your case should be like. My research statement is a two-page document with the following structure: a paragraph succinctly describing my overall research agenda, a paragraph describing a major theme in my research portfolio (primarily highlighting my JMP here), a paragraph describing a second theme in my research portfolio (other papers from my dissertation), a paragraph describing how I plan to build off my dissertation work to create new pubs, one to two paragraphs about actual works in progress, and a concluding paragraph succinctly restating my first one. The flow of your research statement will depend on the research you have done and how it ties together with each other, as well as what you expect your future research agenda to be. You're painting that picture for a hiring committee so they have an idea of how you might accomplish their tenure requirements. You'll usually be asked how your research agenda will unfold in first-round interviews anyway, so approaching the research statement with this in mind can prep you for those questions.
- **Teaching statement:** Like the research statement, get a few templates from recently graduated colleagues and get a sense of what the structure in your case should be like. My actual statement is just under a page and a half. In my case, I had taught six semesters of undergrad intro to microeconomics. Your first paragraph can explicitly state your experience, as well as things like typical enrollment and course modality. The second paragraph and on are more about your goal as an instructor. The second paragraph should discuss a high level goal of what you hope to accomplish as an instructor (perhaps with your individual "why" attached to it if it's legitimate). The remaining paragraphs should provide examples of themes in your classroom that, when described in detail, provide practical ways you achieve your main goal as an instructor. Wrap up with a paragraph reflecting on your experience with how you view improvement going forward. Use this paragraph as a segue to provide a short summary of your evidence of teaching effectiveness. In the teaching statement itself, it's helpful to prepackage excerpts/stats of

qualitative and quantitative evaluations for easy reading. I did this with excerpts of student emails (Unsolicited Qualitative Feedback), student free responses (Anonymous Online Course Questionnaire Feedback), and summary statistics of your rates across semesters for high quantitative responses. Depending on your course evals as an instructor, you may have to figure out what story you want to paint. One way is to show how high your evals are relative to your department averages. Another is to show positive growth in your eval responses over time. Depending on how many courses you have taught and what those courses were, your presentation of these summarized teaching metrics may vary.

- **Evidence of teaching effectiveness:** For academic jobs with teaching emphasis, they also may ask for evidence of teaching effectiveness. If they don't, I would have included a summary of quantitative and qualitative student feedback in my teaching statement already, as I mentioned above. If they do, then I attach my evidence of teaching effectiveness file, which is a PDF compilation of all of my course evaluations with a table of contents at the front. You can use Adobe Acrobat to construct this with all your evals. At IU, there is also an eval summary report document that can be generated for those courses you've taught across time for you; you can include this as well if you have that.
- **DEI statement:** My DEI statement is a two-page long statement that traces how I embed diversity, equity, and inclusion in my research, teaching, and service. This statement can be hard to write at first because it's often hard to find unique ways to state something that is so obvious or so well put by others. With some examples to go by, it's easier to see how yours should flow. My first paragraph gives an overview of how I am committed to these principles. The next several paragraphs provide examples of how I do this in research and in teaching. Academic service is not something as PhD students we often have much experience with, but briefly highlighting any form of informal or formal mentorship/advocacy you've participated in or even non-academic forms of service can help to paint the picture. Throughout this document, don't try to craft anything out of thin air. I think if it feels forced to you, it will feel forced to the hiring committee.
- I'll discuss letters of recommendation separately below, since there is more detail there to consider. Other than the occasional request for an unofficial graduate transcript upfront, which is easy to get, sometimes you will be asked for a response to a specific question from a university or institution or some other document that's not common. I wouldn't worry about trying to anticipate these sorts of things; if they pop up, you can typically knock them out for each application. Usually this is the case if you are applying to an organization with a religious tie or specific mission due to a funding source.

Preparing for the Job Market: Letters of Recommendation

- Before you begin to apply for jobs, **perhaps around the beginning of the fall semester of the year you go on the market**, you need to reach out to those on your committee who you wish to write confidential letters of recommendation for you and ask if they are willing. Every job will ask for essentially **three** confidential letters of recommendation for you. You should request this early enough prior to applying to give your letter writers enough time to write the letters and upload them where they need to be. But they may want to see enough material (your JMP draft or an almost-finished version, perhaps other documents) so that they can write the best letter.

- In my case, I had a draft of my JMP that I was willing to share with my committee in August 2023. I didn't apply for any jobs prior to September 15th, 2023, and I told my committee that this is when I was hoping to have their letters in the right places by. I got the sense this was relatively early, so if you don't plan to start applying until later, you can tell your writers a later deadline. I just had some job postings on my list with early deadlines. Either way, **give them a date and instructions on what to do with the letters, especially if you have letter writers outside the economics department.** Whatever your situation, I think being courteous by giving enough time and being clear about your expectations is important here, once they have agreed to write you a letter.
- What *should* faculty do with their letters? Unlike most job documents, letters of recommendation are meant to be confidential, so they will not be seen by you directly, and you are not going to upload them when applying. Instead, there are different scenarios that will play out when you apply. The easiest scenario is that the website the job is posted hosts several job postings (AEA JOE, Interfolio, EconJobMarket) and your letter writers can directly upload their letters there. In the case of Interfolio, you can even submit job applications without the letter writers having fulfilled their letters, and then once they have submitted their letters, your application is automatically updated, which is amazing. AEA JOE and EJM applications are similar: you can upload all of your materials, but the application status will be incomplete until all letters are uploaded. **You'll want to tell your letter writers to upload their letters to these specific sites, and you can specifically "request" them to do so from your end as a candidate.**
- For other applications, your letters will either need to be uploaded directly to the institution's website by your letter writers or sent to a specific email address with a specific subject line and attachments.
 - In the first case, your letter writers will have to manually upload their letters, and you may have to reach out to them about this. For instance, any University of California system school application will require this.
 - In the second case (if this is an option for you), we had a graduate coordinator who could be sent letters by our letter writers and then **would forward letters as a proxy for our letter writers** to these specific email addresses. This was a nice service that some departments don't have access to, and you may hear of others having to pay for delivery through another service that Interfolio offers. You should check to see if this is an option for you.
- For anyone who specifically is interested in academic teaching jobs, the posting may ask for a letter of recommendation from someone who can speak to your teaching ability. In this case, maybe a department course coordinator would be a good letter writer. Just consider who that might be and try to give them plenty of time to write it as well if you think you will need this.
- Finally, I think many of the jobs I applied to didn't actually request letters of recommendation at the application stage. Instead, they only required you to include your letter writer's contact information, which you often have to manually input into applications (easily the most annoying part of filling out so many applications). That said, it can be helpful to construct in advance a file of your letter writers and their names, emails, academic titles, and mailing addresses, as this information will be asked of you time and

time again. If you're lucky, you can just submit this file with your application materials instead of manually typing it all in.

Stage 0: Advertising Yourself as a Candidate

- Selling yourself as a researcher is one of the most important skills you can have. But this skill is very underdiscussed before you hit the job market for good reason: *you (and your mentors) don't know who you are as a researcher*. You can't work on how to succinctly describe your research portfolio if you don't have a research portfolio yet! Thus, **learning how to advertise yourself as a researcher** and as a **job market candidate in general** often feels like it doesn't happen as early as it should, if there is any help offered at all. So if you're at or near the job market phase of your PhD and you haven't thought about advertising yourself, it's go time.
- What do I mean by "advertise" or "sell" yourself? Broadly speaking, I mean the practice of clearly and briefly communicating with others who you are and what work you do. (I'm not talking about being unnaturally sales-y in any way to others. Don't do that.) This can include more formal communication, but the bulk of "marketing" yourself **I view as informal**: how do you introduce yourself to others in passing conversations at conferences and academic settings? Or how do you use digital tools like a personal website or social media to inform others about what kind of work you do? Answers to these questions seem insignificant early in your PhD when you are a nobody just taking courses and trying to figure things out. But when you hit the market, and you've got a research agenda to show off, **all the small things add up**, and the more ways you are accustomed to sharing who you are, the more payoff you will have. Below, I will describe some of the key tools I've found important in advertising yourself.
- **Headshot**: first things first, **get a professional headshot**. You need a profile picture for your website and any social media you use for academic purposes, so do it way before the month you go on the market. Ask around for what others have done for headshots. At IU, for instance, there is now a photo booth in the Career Center where you can do this on your time. Many conferences typically provide professional portraits for free for students; sign up. You'll never regret having a good headshot handy.
- **Website**: at some point before you go on the market, **you need to craft a personal website**. There are several options for doing this, some more intensive than others, and there are pros and cons to each option you have. Important things to consider when you are figuring out what to do: will you have to buy a domain or pay for any fees with your choice of setting up a website? Will you have the ability to customize the URL or have control of the website presentation itself? How will you host files like your JMP or CV? If everyone has to "request access" to your Google Drive or Dropbox, they just won't read your material.
 - **My personal solution** for this was to create a personal website using Github. It's pretty natural considering all the coding we do as economists. You can customize the URL in accordance with your Github username, so choose that wisely. You can also host files on the associated Github repository, and it's free to do all of this. The drawback is that you may have to fiddle with some HTML code depending on which template and tutorial you follow to set things up. It may be easier to go through more

easy-to-use website services, even if it costs money. No shame in doing what's right for you.

- Another big element of making your website (once it exists) is **making sure it pops up on Google Search**. If you type in your name on Google Search, ideally your personal website is the first thing that comes up. When you first create a website, this will rarely be the case, even if your name is rather unique. To assist with this, spend some time getting acquainted with **Google Search Console**. By connecting your URL with a Google Search Console profile, you can make sure that Google Search will index your website for inclusion into search results, which is often not automatic.
- **LinkedIn**: LinkedIn is so common for networking, especially in non-academic sectors. You should do your best to keep your LinkedIn profile up-to-date like you hopefully keep your CV, **especially if you are not sold on academia**. By your job market cycle, try to have a solid headshot, bio, title ("Economics PhD **Candidate**"), detailed education and work experience, maybe a couple of posts from some conferences you participated in or related research, and links to your personal website or any publications.
- **Twitter JMP Thread (#EconTwitter)**: For a long time, Twitter (now X) and its respective community of economists (usually tweeting with #EconTwitter) was really prolific and useful for networking and learning about new research across all fields. Despite Elon's best efforts to mismanage the website into oblivion, there still seems to be a significant user base on the website as of my time as a job market candidate, to the point that I still think **posting about your research on Twitter is a useful way to introduce yourself** when you are on the market to other researchers. To do this, consider **creating a Twitter thread summarizing your JMP at some point in late October or early November**. There is more or less a template for this that you can find from searching across Twitter, because so many candidates do this, but the basic gist is **a more informal elevator/5-minute pitch with screenshots from your paper**. Typically, the first tweet is an intro of you as a candidate with a picture of your headshot or your JMP abstract, followed by a "hook" tweet for your research question with a puzzling or informative "Figure 1" graph. From there, feel it out, but you can quickly get to what you do in the paper and how you do it with another tweet or two, capped off by a tweet summarizing in whatever way you find best. **Be conversational in your language; use a minimal amount of jargon**. If you include the hashtag #EconTwitter and have a sufficient network already, I think you'll find success; many nice economists love to pay it forward and retweet these threads to their networks. Personally, I benefitted from this sort of thing, and I even *received a job lead in my Twitter DMs for a job that hadn't been posted yet* because they saw my JMP thread retweeted and thought I'd be a good fit. As long as Twitter/X is alive, I'd take the time to do this; the only downside is the little bit of time it takes and the intentionality of doing it right.
- **Job Posting Site Profiles**: Once you actually hit the job market phase, you'll discover that the AEA JOE website has a JOE Candidate Profile for you to fill out. You'll also have to do some similar things for places like EconJobMarket, USAJobs, and potentially other job boards you are looking at. I would say that I doubt too many employers are looking primarily at these website-specific profiles for any information gathering about you, so **I wouldn't worry about beefing these up the same way you would more public-facing tools like**

your personal website and social media. That said, you should fill these out and make sure they don't look like skeletons. It's possible that an empty profile could be a negative signal, and for all it's worth, it's all basically the same information as what you've put elsewhere.

- **Elevator/5-Minute Pitches:** Perhaps more than anything above, figuring out how to introduce yourself to others and briefly describe your work might be one of the most rewarding investments you can make. The more you practice this, the more it will feel natural, and the better you will be. You want to be able to do this without thinking, essentially. So what's the basic idea? Imagine someone you just shook hands with at a conference has asked you to tell them about yourself. **For me, I think of a good elevator pitch to be very similar to your opening slides for a conference talk.** First, you say your name and that, for example, you're an Economics Ph.D. Candidate at your university (AND THAT YOU ARE ON THE MARKET!). Next, you should provide a brief sentence summarizing your research interests and agenda. There's a common phrase that goes something like "my research lies at the intersection of Field 1 and Field 2" that feels a bit overplayed, but figure out the best way to quickly relay what the essence of your research is all about. Then, it's JMP time. Start with a retelling of your title essentially, then what you want is to draw them in just like with your intro slides in a talk. Tell me the background, then give me the problem or puzzle. Then tell me your research question and how you do what you do. Then summarize with something about the relevancy of your findings. This should be concise, but you should feel comfortable going into more detail if you are interrupted with a question.
 - **Background → Problem → Research Question → What I Do → What I Find**
- Hopefully when you are approaching the market, you are so excited about the work you've done with your JMP that you are bursting at the seams to share it. Being passionate about your research makes it extremely natural to advertise your work to others, so that's the ideal scenario. However, we ourselves are often our hardest critics, and we are so focused on improving the limitations of our JMP that we forget how much of a contribution it actually is. It might be worth talking with advisors and mentors to recover that sense of passion on your project, but it's important. If you feel excited about your research, even with the limitations, **others will feel that optimism as well.** It's contagious.

Stage 1: Job Market Postings and Applications

- I think the primary piece of advice I would pass on for the job market is to **do a little bit each day.** In other words, the entire process will be more manageable if you pace yourself by doing a small amount of job market prep work every other day rather than waiting until the last minute to do everything. The earlier you get a solid draft of your JMP, the earlier you get a solid draft of your job application documents, the better you will be able to pace yourself for job applications. You don't want to be burnt out by December. Work/life balance is the secret to everything.
- In the 2023-24 job market cycle, job postings on the American Economic Association (AEA) Job Openings for Economists (JOE) website went up as early as August 1st, 2023. Don't worry about starting to apply this early, but if possible, **start taking inventory of what jobs are being posted.** The earlier you start keeping track of what jobs you plan to apply for, the

less insane that process will be when the flood of job postings really hits in September, October, and November.

- Taking inventory of job postings is really up to what works best for you. For me, I decided on **creating a Google Sheet spreadsheet where I manually input details of each job I saw that I thought was worth applying for**. I know others have just exported all the postings from JOE as an Excel spreadsheet, but I was looking in places other than JOE, and I also wanted more control over what characteristics of jobs I was documenting. For me, the columns of my spreadsheet included details like **Location, Work Modality, Type of Job, Department, Fields in Application, Teaching Load, Salary, Deadline for Application, Materials Needed, URL for Job Posting**, and a Yes/No for if I applied. This spreadsheet evolved over time, as I added columns representing scores for my geographic and job type preferences as well as other things once I started getting into interviews. You can really customize this sort of thing how you want and what works for you. Do what helps you stay on top of postings.
- As I mentioned above, AEA JOE isn't the only place to look for jobs, but **most jobs targeted toward Econ PhDs will eventually end up on the JOE**. EconJobMarket is another common website for Econ PhD jobs, and I've heard this is especially true for non-US jobs. For academic jobs, I found that HigherEdJobs actually seemed to be a few days ahead of AEA JOE. I would check HigherEdJobs and see a posting for a job that would be posted on AEA JOE a few days later. HigherEdJobs is across all disciplines so you can use it to look for openings in adjacent academic fields if that's applicable to you. Some other places to stay updated for jobs might be NABE (business economics) or APPAM (public policy). I found USAJobs to be a bit clunky for searching for jobs and instead often just looked for government jobs on AEA JOE. Don't forget employers like Amazon may just expect you to visit their website to apply for openings. Finally, I think places like LinkedIn are mostly a crapshoot for applying for Econ PhD relevant jobs. Most jobs there are not usually targeted towards us, and if they were, they would be posted on the JOE. That said, I still checked LinkedIn and applied for some jobs through them, but I wouldn't say I found any unique leads this way.
- The conventional wisdom is that most job application deadlines are November 15th, or around the fall break and Thanksgiving holiday. However, **I personally experienced deadlines way earlier as well as later than what my committee seemed to expect for econ jobs posted on AEA JOE**. Be especially mindful of deadlines if you are applying across academic disciplines.
- **The real deadlines of the job postings won't always be in the "Application Deadline" section of the posting**. In fact, in many cases, the real deadline is buried in the text of the job posting about when "complete applications will be fully considered" or similar language, so keep an eye out for that.
- Once you've got your JMP, job documents, and letters of recommendation all sorted out, you can start applying when you feel comfortable. No one told me when I should start, so I just started when I had all my stuff together. Use application deadlines to prioritize which jobs to apply for first, **but the earlier you start applying, the better**. I also received advice at a conference from senior faculty at an Ivy League school that there is actually a benefit to getting your application in early. The idea is that you're catching a member of the hiring

committee with your application on their couch late at night, looking through apps at the end of a long day, having done this same thing over and over. They are tired. The earlier in the process they evaluate your package, the less burnt out they will be when they evaluate it. Is that really the case? I don't know, but it motivated me to get going early.

- Out of all the faculty, whether on my committee or just giving me advice, the resounding wisdom I always heard from people was **to apply for a high number of jobs**. For me, my total number of applications at the end was 228. It will be different for everyone in every year. Obviously, if there's no possible way you'd take a position, don't apply, but if there seems like a possible fit, or the search is open field, why not? Apply even if you have questions about the fit. I was open-minded on what kind of job I wanted going in, so this was my mentality already, but if you need convincing, consider this: you don't know what you don't know. This process more than anything is a **learning process for you to figure out who you are and what you want out of your career**. When else do you have the opportunity to be exposed to this many different kinds of job options? It's a fact-finding mission, and if you treat it as one, you might learn about a job that you didn't even know existed, one where you might end up the happiest.
- This will probably happen before you actually get to this point, but on a related note, you will frequently get the question of **"what kind of jobs are you applying to/interested in?"** leading up to and during the job market. It's a typical icebreaker question when someone finds out you're on the market. My answer was always that I "plan to cast a wide net in terms of my search" and that was true. That said, just know that unless you can somehow see into the future, you can't possibly know the real answer because you don't know all the kinds of jobs that are both available and a good fit for you. It's not that I didn't have an idea of what I liked; it's just that I didn't know what all was out there for me. It wasn't until I went through the interview process before I started to really figure out what kind of job I would value the most. So try not to be too close-minded; don't live and die by your answer to the above question. The job market process itself will help you decide what you want out of your career.
- Like I've said already, figuring out **the proper pace to apply for jobs is key**. For me, I was an RA and working on a few different co-authored projects with regular meetings while also applying for jobs. Starting at the end of September, my goal was to submit between 20 to 30 job applications a week. It was an arbitrary number I picked, so don't think it's a magic number or anything. I did this by setting aside time on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays to update my job spreadsheet with new postings and submit applications. I averaged submitting 10 applications a day on those days. I wasn't perfect on that every week, and it was relatively exhausting to do, but it was the lesser of two evils (having hundreds of applications to submit all at the last minute). But I did this from middle of September through the end of November and early December to apply for all the jobs on my list.
- Lastly, my advice is once you start to get close to the end of applying for jobs and you start to hear back from employers, it's time to start regularly updating your committee if you haven't already. Starting around the end of November or beginning of December, **I would start to share with your committee where you are on applications and who you have heard from for first-round interviews**. I did this every two weeks but do what works for you and your advisors; just ask them how often they want to be updated. You may even choose

to directly share a Google document or something editable, but they may rather have summarized info over having to scroll through your spreadsheets. They want to stay in the loop; they are likely listening to their networks about what jobs are out there too.

Stage 1.5: AEA Signaling

- Around the end of November, there will be a deadline to input what are called “signals” to two different job postings on the AEA JOE. You’ll get a notification about this if you have a AEA JOE candidate profile. You’ll have to log in to the AEA JOE website to submit the “signal” before the deadline.
- Going into this (literally the day I had to submit), I had an idea of what to do, but had I done what I planned, it would have been a waste of time. Thankfully, the documentation from the AEA on signaling as well as conversations with my advisors and mentors cleared things up so I believe I did the right thing before submitting my signals. What I had thought the signaling was for was to essentially determine which postings were at the very top of your list, as in your ideal #1 and #2, and to relay that to those employers. Generally speaking, this is a **complete misunderstanding of what the AEA signaling process is for**. If your #1 and #2 options are at academic institutions where you are “shooting higher” than your department, your signal is likely not informative to the employer (i.e., “Of course Austin wants to work at our department! It’s way better than his department!”).
- Instead, what you need to do is **identify employers you are most interested in BUT you think may not give you an interview because THEY may think you would not take the offer**. For instance, if you have a really strong preference to be at a certain kind of college or university, or a particular location fit, or something like that that’s unique that makes you really interested in an institution, but the employer might think you would look over them, you should consider sending one of your signals to them.
- That all said, it is what it is. I’m not sure my signals ended up doing anything (neither of my signals gave me a first-round interview), and I’ve heard similar stories from faculty. Don’t stress too much about this process; just make a plan, do it, and don’t think about it much afterward.
- One weird thing to me about this process is that the deadline for submitting signals seems to fall almost right after most application windows close. In other words, you may have heard from some employers, but many employers are still reviewing applications, and you may not know who will reach out to you and who won’t for a first-round interview on your own. I’m not sure if it makes sense to send a signal to a place you’ve already received an interview invitation from. My guess is that you shouldn’t do this, but talk to your advisors.
- I personally did not send a signal to a non-academic institution, so I can’t speak to that. I’m not sure if there are different norms/expectations/understandings for signals sent to those employers, but it would be worth trying to find out if you find yourself thinking of doing so.

Stage 2: Setting Up Interviews

- There are traditionally two rounds to the interview process: first-round interviews and second-round interviews, or “flyouts”. I’ll say it again below, but it’s important to go ahead and say here that advice you receive will typically stem from the principle that **you want to**

maximize the number of everything you get at every stage. You want to apply to as many jobs as is fitting so you can get as many first-round interviews as possible so you can get as many flyouts as possible so you can get as many offers as possible on the table at the same time so you can pick the best offer and leverage other offers to make your best offer even better (deep breath). That's what everyone's got in the back of their mind when they are giving you advice because that's how it is seen that you will get the best possible outcome, (and generally speaking, I think that's probably true). I'm also sure it looks good for your department when you and your fellow job market candidates draw more interest from employers vs. less. Anyway, just expect this to be the advice and the motivation behind the advice.

- As you are probably aware, most first-round interviews used to occur in person at the AEA/ASSA annual meeting at the beginning of January. This stopped being the case around the COVID-19 pandemic, and so there are more incentives to be a first mover than ever before. The AEA still puts out expectations on timelines for employers to conduct interviews (i.e., not during the annual meeting sessions), but **anticipate the possibility of getting contacted much earlier than what you are told is normal by your advisors.** Keep even more of an open mind if you are applying across academic disciplines.
- If you are specifically interested in industry/consulting jobs, many employers will provide an option for you in the application process to submit an “early decision” application or something similar. This is if you know what you want, you are trying to speed up the process, and you want to bypass the rest of the job market cycle. In that case, I'd expect to hear very early from these groups. I didn't do this, so I can't speak too much on it.
- Some employers, especially non-academic employers, will host information sessions for anyone interested, like a webinar. I went to a few of these, my examples being Amazon and the Federal Trade Commission. Since one of the main benefits of being on the market is exposure to all kinds of jobs, I'd recommend attending these for jobs where your schedule permits, even if you're not sure you'd want to work there. It's helpful to get general info about workplaces and get a sense of what workflows are like prior to having any interviews.
- When it comes to initial contact, some employers (again, usually non-academic) will reach out to schedule what I'd call a short **phone screen/interview/call.** It's usually a really short audio-only cell phone call (less than 15 minutes) and usually with an HR person or organization representative, rather than an economist or technical team member. Don't stress too much about these. It's very relaxed and conversational, usually with the intention of scheduling you for the actual first-round interview rather than attempting to screen you out. If you talk about your research at all, it will be very big picture. I actually found these really beneficial, because the contacts often make a point to share good information up front about salary, insurance benefits, PTO, work flexibilities, parental leave, etc.
- I would expect to receive emails from employers to schedule the **bulk of first-round interviews sometime after fall break/Thanksgiving and early to mid-December before the semester break.** Employers may wait until after the new year to initiate and schedule as well, though. I had at least one invitation for a first-round interview hit my inbox in the middle of January.
- For scheduling interviews, you typically have to give some times, then they come back with a time, then you confirm. After about 6-8 months of pretty constant job market work, you

will hopefully have a relatively open schedule and have time for scheduling several interviews each week of December and January. If you don't already have a system for keeping track of your meetings, **make sure you schedule everything on some sort of calendar system that works for you.** I use Google Tasks linked up with my personal Google Calendar so I can keep track of my whole day, but whatever you do, you just need to make sure you can quickly reference what works for you and when you are booked.

Stage 3: Doing First-Round Interviews

- First-round interviews are hopefully fun. I found them fun, at least. Of course, they can be nerve-wracking, but by the time you get to the interview phase, you feel confident in your ability to talk about yourself and your research! Typically, hiring committees who are interviewing you are extremely kind and courteous. They are hoping to connect with you as a person.
- First-round interviews are now all almost entirely on Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Make sure your setup is good. Get a good mic and/or good lighting to accompany a deficient setup.
- There is a bit of a back-and-forth game/strategy to first-round interviews, and it's important to have a sense of this structure so you can succeed. First, **most interviews will be somewhere between 25-45 minutes long.** Depending on the kind of institution, this may vary. What will make them feel different is the nature of the job posting and, subsequently, what the hiring committee is concerned about. They'll all start with introductions for everyone on the call, including yourself. From there, you'll usually go into your "elevator pitch" structure.
 - For a research-and-teaching based tenure-track faculty position at an academic institution, they will likely just ask you directly to "tell us about your job market paper". You may spend around 5 minutes, plus or minus a few minutes, giving them the spiel, but I'd always recommend leading with your research agenda, then going into your job market paper. Questions from various members of the interview team will likely bounce around with their respective questions, and that will all take up around 50-70% of the interview. The rest of the time may be spent on teaching questions: your experience, what courses you would want to teach, etc.
 - Other than the teaching questions, I've had very similar experiences with non-academic institutions, honestly. You spend a lot of time talking about your job market paper or research, depending on the posting and what the nature of the job is. Government and industry jobs spend some time after that telling you about their organization and what it's like working there, assuming that you are less familiar with their institution.
 - I didn't have this experience but have heard about jobs that quiz you on your econometrics/coding skills during the interview process. Seems intense. I don't know much about this but it seems this occurred for tech-related industry jobs mostly. The only experience I had that was close to this was an industry interview where we had a 20-minute case study discussion. They seemed focused on just evaluating my thought process and how I would go about approaching a hypothetical version of what they do for a typical client.

- For an academic teaching-focused job, I've had interviews where I didn't have a single question about my job market paper. It's not that we didn't talk about research, but that discussion was more focused on how I saw myself continuing research and meeting their tenure expectations rather than the JMP itself. Through these sorts of conversations, **keep in mind what kind of research resources you are expecting to continue your work once hired somewhere**. Some institutions with lower research expectations may also have fewer research resources, making it harder for certain kinds of research to be done. Some institutions have special partnerships that you may not expect, so pay attention to the kinds of connections you hear about in your interviews.
- I found that there was usually correspondence from employers on **who would be attending the first-round interview** out of courtesy. However, I personally wouldn't worry too much about trying to go through the websites for every single faculty in every single interview or anything like that; in so many cases, the faculty who actually attend may differ slightly. Other than maybe emphasizing certain elements of your JMP that you wouldn't have otherwise, it would be hard for the characteristics you learn about those faculty to surface naturally in the interview anyway.
- Usually at the end of the first-round interview, someone will tell you what to expect in terms of hearing back from them and their timeline. You shouldn't have to ask this, but I don't think it's crazy to follow up on that via email later if you don't have an idea of their timeline.
- To prepare for first-round interviews, our department **set up mock interviews** for candidates with several faculty members. For me, this came after I had already had at least a few interviews, but I actually think it was more helpful because then I used it to really milk it for good feedback. One thing from this process I learned is that I probably spoke way too fast for my initial job market pitch at the beginning of the interview. Making it feel slow so that everyone, not just others in your field, can keep up is a skill. Hiring committees will be made up of various kinds of scholars, not just those in your research focus, so that's your target audience for explaining your work. That was good feedback to hear and it's probably good for pretty much everyone to work on.
- Another thing we discussed in the mock interview is **whether or not to ask questions during the first-round interview**. For context, every single first-round interview I had left a few minutes at the end for a Q&A and invited me to ask a question. It's on you to ask one or not. However, in my mock interview, it was told to me that whether or not you should actually ask any questions at that point is controversial. Apparently, there are two camps on this, with one side of that camp being that you should not ask any questions in the first round. Instead, you'd say something like, "I don't have any questions at this time." That seemed so alien to me when I heard this stance because it runs completely counter-intuitive to my understanding of being a good interviewee. Wouldn't you want to ask a good question to signal that you are actually interested in the position? When I asked why one wouldn't want to ask any questions, the reasoning I heard was more or less the following: you are one of several candidates in the first round, and what you don't want to do is ask them a question that the committee feels like they can't answer. Then, they will supposedly remember you for this difficulty in answering your question, not how good of an interview you actually had. As a result, it's better to not to ask any question at all. Now, that may not

be the only reason, or that may be a poor representation of the reasoning I was given for why you shouldn't ask a question. I'll leave it up to you to determine what is most convincing. In practice, I found that it would be way too awkward to not ask ANY questions. They literally ask if you have any questions and then create silence for you. You have to say something, and saying you have no questions just never felt right to me. What I ended up saying in most interviews was something sincere but open-ended, along the following lines: "Well, you all have been really helpful and informative in your communication throughout this process, and I came into the interview with a question about [insert element about the job you might have had a question about], but you all have touched on that in detail in our conversation. Maybe one question I could ask to you all is this: what's one thing you feel is underrated about working at [organization/institution]? Or what's one thing you didn't know/expect before starting at [organization/institution] that you really appreciate?"

- Another question that my mock interviewers asked, which did come up in at least one real first-round interview, is **which journal I planned to submit my JMP to**. This is a really tricky question but a very good one, especially for tenure-track jobs: it involves you having some knowledge about the natural floor and ceiling of your own work as well as good ideas about the journals themselves. Interviewers can really elicit quite a bit off this one question alone, if you think about it. If you say something really off, whether because you overrate/underrate your work or because you lack knowledge about which journals are relatively valuable in your field, it will be immediately be concerning to the committee you are interviewing with that your research pipeline to a tenure track is not promising. I would really recommend discussing with your advisors what a good answer to this question is. In general, I think the proper answer is to have a "shoot-for-the-stars" answer (the journal you'd first try to submit your best work to), then some good but more attainable journal(s) if your first option falls through. This all depends on your work and where you find yourself, though, so talk to your committee.
- I heard some advice that employers may like to receive a follow-up email after the first-round interview thanking them for the opportunity to interview and their time. Not sure if this is a social norm across all institutions (I definitely did not do this for all employers, and maybe I should have).
- In terms of number of first-round interviews to expect, I again think it's different for everyone. For me, I ended up with **22 first-round interviews** ranging across academic and non-academic sectors.
- Lastly, I just want to emphasize that you may not know what kind of job you'll prefer as you go into the first-round interviews. But I do think this part of the cycle is really illuminating for each candidate. I believe that you'll start to have a true sense of what your preferences for a job really are once you've gone through this process.

Stage 4: Flyouts

- Most of your efforts up to this point will be to maximize the number of flyouts you end up receiving. Hopefully, you've got some options on the table here that turn out to be good.
- Don't be surprised if **some organizations are quicker than others** at scheduling the second-round flyout, even if it's being scheduled well in advance. This goes back to the unraveled market since the first-round interviews are no longer at AEAs. In my case, I had

two flyouts organized already by the beginning of December, which was extremely early. I still only had those two flyouts at the end of the first week of January, because most employers were still just scheduling first-round interviews. **Expect flyouts to occur anywhere between mid-to-late January to February** (or maybe later as the market unravels).

- Usually booking hotel reservations, travel accommodations, and your entire schedule for your visit will be coordinated in advance. I heard the advice long ago that **if you don't have a credit card** or some way to accommodate spending that you will be reimbursed for later, **it's good to get one in advance** of flyout season. In my case, this proved true, since even if a hotel room is paid for by the organization, I still had to put a credit card down for incidentals. You're also buying meals in airports and other sort of expenses that can get reimbursed too. And while we're on the cusp of having a higher-paying job, we are still grad students, so those charges hitting your checking account can add up, especially if you have more than one flyout at a time. Putting it on a credit card can allow you to defer that payment until the next month (I'm not advocating for you to go into debt here!!), around the time you'll likely get mailed reimbursement checks.
- In the typical structure of a flyout, and as you'll see when they email you a copy of your schedule, **you'll plan to spend the equivalent of a full day with an organization in and out of meetings** with potential future colleagues, as well as a JMP research talk and potentially a mock teaching lecture (happened at least once in my case). You'll also likely grab at least one, if not multiple, meals with potential future colleagues. I know for me, even though I consider myself a social person, flyouts felt like I was "on" from the moment I woke up until the moment I crashed in bed. It's going to take a lot of your energy!
- In terms of how the flyout goes minute-to-minute, **I really did not anticipate how much of it was going to be just casual conversation**. It's hard to understate this, and it's true through both the scheduled meetings and the in-betweens where you are getting picked up or walked from place to place. On one of my first flyouts especially, I had plenty of communication with the employer and had a good idea of how it was going to go schedule-wise, but I was still completely surprised by how much of the flyout was basically just **informal chatting**. Each one-on-one meeting was less of a true interview (although I got some good questions from each person) and more of a getting-to-know-you experience. They really are evaluating the fit at this point. On paper, you might be a great candidate, but *are you a good match for this group? Would you be a good colleague?* I think I knew this was a key part of it, but it was more or less **all of it**. It's like a soft skill showcase. In this environment, there's an art to demonstrating how quickly you can connect with everyone, and that's what they want to see. For example, greeting every single person you meet with eye contact and a good handshake, and remembering their names, including staff support in the departments and teams, will go a long way. Of course, every employer you have a flyout with will feel different, and depending on the culture of the place you are at, the vibes may differ quite a bit. **Just anticipate the level of social interaction to be at the highest end of what you are used to**. And most importantly, be perceptive of the kind of work environment YOU want to have; does this employer meet those expectations for YOU?
- Specifically on the **series of one-on-one meetings that occur with faculty (if academic) or with potential colleagues (if non-academic)**: these usually have a structure to them

along the lines of introductions and brief discussions of similarities/research synergies wrapped up by an invitation for questions and details about the institution you are joining. By this point, you've already met most of the people who are on your schedule (they were likely in your first-round interview or attending your talks/shared meals). For some of these people, you'll have overlap in research you can discuss. For others, it may go quickly to an invitation to ask questions. I found these invitations rather difficult. In many cases, I didn't have a huge amount of questions lingering, or at least ones that would be appropriate to ask at that stage and/or to that person. Figure out a good strategy for these moments, like asking if there is anything they wished they knew before taking the job, or anything that they think you should be asking about. This was what I ended up saying, and I'm not sure if those were bad questions, but they didn't feel awkward to say and it kept the vibe conversational.

- My flyout experiences were all great, and I had no reason to think they would be any different. Especially in hindsight, they were really fun opportunities to see new places, meet people, and just enjoy the culmination of the work you've put in to your PhD, honestly. But I still felt relatively anxious leading up to each of them. If you're a similar kind of person, just keep this in mind. Try to get a good night's sleep beforehand.
- I did have **a virtual flyout experience** for two industry jobs where everyone was remote or hybrid. In one case, the typical "full day" of meetings was spread out over 3 days, where I had 3 separate 30-45 minute meetings with 3 different groups of people, and then a 1-hour job talk on another day. I actually appreciated this because I never felt fatigued in this process. In another case, I had the three 30-minute meetings with different people all back-to-back (and no job talk). I wouldn't say this felt too exhausting either, but it's definitely a long time.
- It's worth saying that **the time of year where flyouts occur can also coincide with pretty bad winter weather**. I had to reschedule at least one flyout because of a snowstorm. I also had an issue where I was driving to a flyout (which may also make more sense in certain cases), but the rental car company I planned to use called me that day to tell me that because of bad weather lately, all their cars were out of service. I had to quickly find a backup option, and it all worked out, but there was definitely a moment of panic. Employers can be flexible, so don't stress too much, but be ready to reschedule and rebook when necessary.
- Keep in mind that you may be scheduling and having flyouts with more than one employer while also still trying to wrap up first-round interviews at the end of January/early February. There are so many moving parts at this stage, so make sure you've got some space in your calendar and tentative plans in place for any duties you might have that semester. Don't forget scheduling in advance the small details either, as in to plan things like **getting your hair cut** or **getting your clothes dry-cleaned** between flyouts.

Stage 4.5: Waiting

- Waiting to hear back from employers at any stage was, to me, **the most stressful part about the job market**. At each stage in the job market, you do a bit of waiting from employers: on initial interest in your application to get a first-round interview, on subsequent interest to get a flyout, and finally on an offer.

- However, **I think the waiting in the later stages is where it is the most difficult to keep a healthy mental attitude** (which is why I put it here). In my case, the earlier stages were filled with so many applications and so many possibilities that I wasn't feeling too much anxiety from the possibility of being rejected by a given employer. But by the point where you have completed most of your first-round interviews & working your way into flyouts, you have a sense of what's on the table for you, at least in the major phase of the job market cycle. At that point, you probably have some idea of what job(s) you are feeling best about. And when you start to imagine being in a given role, and you are visualizing working with a specific employer... that's when waiting to hear back can feel the most stressful.
- Another thing that makes waiting to hear back from employers so difficult is that not every employer's timeline is the same. I was post-flyout stage for at least one employer while still finishing first-round interviews and scheduling flyouts for others. That level of "any day now I could hear back from this one..." juxtaposed with trying to prep for other first and second round interviews is just very taxing on the brain.
- Ok, so it's stressful. What can you do about it? Let's talk **practical advice**.
 - I think step one is realizing that this stress will hit you, so **anticipating it** is good.
 - Next, find **your go-to for relieving stress**. My go-to for stress is to go for regular walks or get some sort of regular exercise, but the motivation is lacking when you can't just go outside and do it (not as easy in the winter as in a different season to me, at least). So plan ahead: figure out where you are going to go and block out your schedule for it. Make it non-negotiable. Campus rec centers have great options for cardio; find a treadmill or elliptical and just put your headphones in for at least 30 minutes. By the time you are a candidate, you may not be paying fees to give you automatic access to the on-campus facilities, but at IU, for instance, you can buy a semester pass for \$80 or otherwise pay \$10 every time you go. Or find another gym off-campus. My stance is that some form of exercise in your routine is the way to go, but really consider what (healthy) ways you have at your disposal to relieve stress.
 - **Keeping your mind occupied during this time** is actually an underrated part of things. You'd think that you'd be really busy in the interview phase, and you are, but in a weird, sporadic sort of way. Otherwise, you're probably not doing too much on your JMP research, and everyone in your life is expecting you to be busy, so you actually might have an unusual amount of downtime in between interviews. The holiday/semester break adds to this. My suggestion is to find something that helps you from sitting at your place in a spiral of thoughts, constantly checking your email. Do you have a video game you've been meaning to play through? What about a show you've wanted to watch? Book? Podcast? Unless you're extremely disciplined and keep yourself occupied with a busy schedule naturally, or you have a hefty amount of teaching/research duties keeping you busy, think about ways to keep your mind occupied. I think it will help.
- Sometimes you'll be told when to expect an update, and that date will come and go without any correspondence. **Check with your committee on when it might be appropriate to send a follow-up email**, especially for jobs that are high on your list. Keep in mind that any date you hear from an employer reflects their expected timelines, and things are in flux quite a bit for everyone. Don't assume the worst if you don't hear back when you expect to. I

eventually heard back from this employer, and it wasn't a rejection. Everyone's timelines are different and subject to change.

Stage 5: Getting an Offer

- You may get an offer **very quickly after returning from a flyout**. I received my first offer just a few days after returning from one of my earliest flyouts in the second round.
 - The way I got my first offer was via phone call from the department chair of the institution I had interviewed with, not the faculty who was coordinating the search (which is normal). It was a brief conversation that emphasized their excitement about the fit and contained information on salary and benefits like moving stipend, teaching buyouts, research startup packages (i.e., the things not discussed explicitly in earlier rounds). Unlike what I've heard about other situations, they told me they'd be flexible and didn't initially give me a time frame to make a decision. However, I had some remaining flyouts scheduled and told them I valued the process and wanted to know I was making the right choice, which they respected. We agreed **on two weeks (the AEA standard expectation)**. The department chair offered to answer any questions I had in the meantime via phone or email and to let them know as soon as I had made a decision. And that was that.
 - My other subsequent offers also came via phone call, although not always right after the flyout. Employers may reach out via email to let you know they will call with an offer to share details over the phone.
 - No matter what, **eventually you should get an offer in writing**. Any conditions you want to be for sure guaranteed in your job should be in that offer, and what I've always heard is to not compromise on that under any circumstances. I did find that the academic offers I had on the table were always verbal; even in the late stages of my decision window, I had not received a formal offer letter. But I was less concerned about that once I got the offer (and offer letter in writing) from my top preference. That said, don't reject a second offer until you have another offer letter in writing.
- Once you get an offer, **things will begin to move very quickly for you**. I personally had no idea how things would unfold once I actually got my first offer. But assuming you are not just looking for an offer from that employer, the first thing your advisors will hopefully tell you to do (after telling you "Congratulations!") is **to now reach out to employers whose search process you are currently in and may prefer to the current option on the table to ask for an update**.
 - The advice I heard was the following: "Without naming the place from which you have an offer, letting any job opening that has expressed an interest right away, that you have a [verbal offer, offer in writing] with a hard deadline of [e.g., two weeks] is information that is customary to provide so it will be very expected. And expressing that potentially an offer from them (the places you are contacting) would be preferred by you, so you would like to see if there is any chance that their process might give you an answer either way within the [2 weeks]."
- While many of the employers I reached out to after following the advice above either gave me a definitive answer (i.e., "you are not currently being considered further" or something

you wish you heard from them earlier), I know that in my case, my first offer was so early that **some employers hadn't even made it to decisions on flyouts for second-round candidates**. It was a bit weird to hear that, but you may be in a situation where you receive an offer but have potential to be hired by employers who are just going to take longer. You may have to make some tough decisions if those are employers who you prefer strongly but are afraid to wait on; talk to your committee in those cases. But never close the door completely in correspondence; just let me them know you will keep them updated on how your decision plays out.

- An ideal situation to unfold would be that **you have more than one offer on the table at the same time**, creating an opportunity to negotiate on the margins between your best options (pay, flexibility, benefits, etc.). In my case, one of my options dominated the others, so I didn't do too much back-and-forth negotiating myself, but consider that this might happen for you.
- One of the biggest things that ended up happening in my case is that once I had an offer, employers let me know **where I ranked in their existing candidate pool**. This wasn't something I directly asked for initially; I just found that some employers, in a desire to be candid with me and where they were, told me where I fell for them. In the cases where I received an offer, I obviously was their first choice at the moment, but in other cases, it is revealed that you are not. The job I ended up taking was a situation where I was *not* the first candidate they extended an offer to, but the employer did well with transparent communication and keeping me updated. In this case, I did ask for them to let me know where I fell in their ranking, and, in that specific case, they did tell me where I ranked and when I would be extended an offer if the existing offer was not taken by a specific date. You may have something similar unfold for an employer you prefer, so just keep this in mind.
- **It's really normal to ask for an extension on your decision window** to an offer you have on the table. Everyone knows it's a crazy time, so don't feel ashamed to ask for this. I asked for a few more days on top of my initial two-week deadline when it became clear that I wouldn't hear back from a few options until after my initial decision window would close.
- During the decision window, **I did reach out with some questions** about the offer. For my non-academic offers, I asked about support for research and conference travel, as well as if there were barriers or limitations to existing and future co-authorship for academic papers. For my non-academic offers, my questions centered around the possibility of buying out teaching responsibilities with grants (some places have limits on this) as well as potential for tuition remission for spouses and dependents (this was an important question for my partner). For some, a spousal hire may be something you can try to leverage but I have no experience with this. In all cases, an important element to clarify with your future employer will be to determine what date you absolutely need to have your PhD by (i.e., figuring out if your offer is conditional on obtaining your PhD by the start date). If you are worried about asking the wrong thing here, don't worry: your committee will be super helpful on this stuff. Be sure to reach out to them with offer details and they will help you think of good questions to ask.
- We live in a small world. Eventually, if you are picking an offer over another, or you are communicating with employers who have chosen not to give you an offer, **be sure to communicate with those contacts professionally**. After all, your first job isn't necessarily

going to be your only job, and/or individual people move around as well, so you may cross paths with any given person for employment in the future. Either way, people know people and word gets around. Burning bridges in any way is highly undesirable, so call and email people with kindness and cordiality.

Optional Stage 6: Secondary Market

- Everyone's experiences may be different. For you, the "main" phase of the job market that starts in the fall and goes through January/February may not be very fruitful. You may also be more interested in post-doctoral positions or other sorts of jobs not previously posted. In that case, the **secondary spring AEA job market postings go up on February 1st**. Keep an eye on these if you are interested or if you are feeling like the first phase didn't go your way. I don't have first-hand experience with this, but I know that the second market/job scramble led to really nice outcomes for colleagues of mine. Don't count it out!