

There are lots of guides and manuals for going on the job market. Here is another, with a focus on the visits. Before you read on, be warned: Do not read too much into any one guide or any one person's advice. Everyone experiences the job market (and in particular the visits) differently. Different universities look for different things. I am a white male who interviewed at four research-focused universities, and that is what this commentary is based on, so take it with a large grain of salt. What I think worked for me may not work for you. In fact, what I think worked for me may not have worked for me.

Also remember that many of the elements of your visit are out of your control. Try not to worry about those bits so much, and just focus on the bits you can control.

My biggest message for the visit would be:

Show the hiring department that you are going to be a good colleague who does not shirk, a nice person to hang out with in the coffee room, a productive scholar they don't have to worry about too much, and someone who would likely take the job if offered it.

A key point that is sometimes hard to be aware of:

It's really really really (yes, three X really) important to make the "switch" in your head from grad student to colleague. From the moment you get a call you have to act like a junior faculty member, even if you're terrified on the inside.

Many job market guides focus on specific questions that you should prepare to be asked, or that you should prepare to ask. That's fine, but I find that approach too rigid.

Rather than preparing specific questions or answers, I think you should spend your energy preparing around certain over-arching themes. Then when you get the variant on question 32.c (iii), you can pull from the thematic preparation you did to create a coherent answer on the spot. Likewise, if you want to ask a question of someone, draw from these central themes. Some themes I found important:

1. What are the teaching needs in the department, and what can you offer that is not yet offered?  
[Have suggestions prepared, but also feel free to ask faculty in the hiring department their opinions. You should definitely have a rough sketch in your head of two grad classes and two undergrad classes you want to teach, for a research-centric school.]
2. What is your CV going to look like in five years?  
[Obviously your answer should not be "ten APSRs and two CUP books, thanks!" Instead you want to demonstrate that you have a vision for your research agenda over the medium term. Your job market paper may be outstanding, as may your dissertation, but you're being hired for 5-7 years (and potentially beyond), so you need to show that you have a sense of where to go next. In grad school you spent all your time thinking about what you would look like when you went on the job market. Now you need to do the same for the next 5 years. It's good to have a mix of concrete ideas and more "big picture" ideas as well. For example, you might want to be able to sketch out "five papers at various stages that I hope to get

published in the next few years, and then I hope to work on a book about XYZ, though at this point the book is more of a loose collection of ideas that I'm trying to coalesce into something coherent.]

3. What motivates you?

[Could be a general statement of what questions drive your work. Could be more personal. I would generally avoid excessively intimate answers at this stage, but detail is good.]

4. What do you think of the state of the discipline?

[Is the discipline in good health? Are we missing key themes in our research? Do we need to radically transform the teaching of quantitative methodology? Do we need to focus more on particular types of approaches to research? Obviously you want to be careful of stepping on toes, but it is important that you've prepared yourself to talk about some of the meta-disciplinary issues in the field.]

5. How are junior faculty treated in this department?

[What are your service obligations going to be like in the first few years? How many classes do junior folks teach? What are reviews like, and when do they happen? Obviously, it is very important that in asking these types of questions you do not signal that you are lazy, nor that you don't care about research and only care about service! Instead, you want to ask yourself what kinds of service obligations interest/excite you – would you like to have some role in shaping the development of a new undergrad honors program? Would you like to re-formulate the grad curriculum? Would you like to be part of university-level committees figuring out how to deal with diversity issues on campus? These are often good issues to talk through with the chair and other junior faculty.]

6. What are the expectations for tenure?

[I know, it's crazy to think about this question, isn't it? But it's a good one, and people will talk to you about tenure a LOT. It shocked me at my first visit, and it would have been better to have been prepared.]

7. What is my lifestyle going to be like here?

[Where do people live? Is it affordable to live there? What's your favourite thing about living in this place? Remember, the people interviewing you are not all going to be 100% business. Lots of them have pets, children, hobbies, favourite restaurants that they'd much rather be talking about than work! If the chance comes up, mention any hobbies you have that fit the area. Mention any family you have in the area. Mention anything you love about the area. Google the area, check the local news to see what's happening, and google the university to see if there are any particular things to be worried/excited by.]

There are also a number of things you can control very directly:

1. For everyone you are going to meet, just look through their website and see what they are working on AT THE MOMENT. Personally I don't believe that everyone you meet expects you to have read their last five papers or know exactly what they do. When you're meeting 15 people over three days, that's a lot to ask. But it's worth at least visiting people's websites,

and giving yourself a sense of who they are and what interests them. If you want, keep a little cheat sheet of names and fields/subjects, but keep it private and don't lose it!

2. Always carry a pen and a little notepad.
3. Always remember to take enough food and supplies for the day. Small things like protein bars, those little jerky packs/sticks can be real lifesavers.
4. Buy yourself a good, comfortable-to-use, clicker that is either rechargeable or get spare batteries. Practice with the clicker.
5. Test your laptop and test it again. You **do not** want to rely on the hiring department's technology.
6. Make sure your schedule has a 30 min break before your talk so you can prepare and check that your laptop and clicker are working.
7. Get a bag that is comfortable and you can carry around everywhere.
8. Check that you have enough professional clothes for three days straight.