

Placement Series:
Introduction to the Job
Market
and
Applying for a Job

Timeline for the (Academic) Sociology Job Market

DATE	ACTIVITY
July	Tell faculty you're on the market, get letters of recommendation, update your web page
July-March	Job postings appear – most Aug.-Nov., earlier for liberal-arts colleges
mid Aug.	ASA meetings – short interviews, informal meetings
Sept.-Apr.	Most job applications due (most Sept.-Oct.)
Sept.-Dec.	Fall job-market workshops: intro, negotiating the offer
Oct.-May	(Most) interviews – (the vast majority Oct.-Jan.)
Nov.-June	(Most) job offers made – (the vast majority Nov.-Feb.)
Jan.-Apr.	Spring job-market workshops: intro, job interview/talk, post-docs, non-academic jobs
July 1 st	Academic appointments begin (a few start in Jan.)

Nine Questions To Ask Yourself

- 1) What kind of academic job am I looking for?
- 2) How developed should my dissertation be?
- 3) Is my publication record adequate?
- 4) What should I have on my c.v.?
- 5) What should my teaching file look like?
- 6) What should I have in the cover letter?
- 7) What should my teaching statement say?
- 8) What writing samples should I include in my application?
- 9) Who should I ask for letters of recommendation?

What kind of job do you want?

- All academic jobs involve significant teaching and research.
- But some jobs are more oriented to teaching, some to research.
- Research 1 institutions place much more emphasis on publication.
- Teaching jobs place much more emphasis on teaching.
- Every department actually wants to have both great teachers and great researchers.

Weber on Science as a Vocation (or Calling)

“Every young man who feels called to scholarship has to realize clearly that the task before him has a double aspect. He must qualify not only as a scholar but also as a teacher. And the two do not at all coincide. One can be a pre-eminent scholar and at the same time an abominably poor teacher.” (133)

What is a “teaching job”?

Example Schools

Dartmouth

Mt. Holyoke

CSU

Haverford

You must publish, but the pressure to publish in the very top journals is somewhat less than at research universities.

You must also be an excellent and versatile teacher (i.e., be able to teach several different courses).

What is a “research job”?

Example Schools

Wisconsin

Michigan

UCSB

Emory

You must publish a lot, and some of it must in the very top journals.

There is an important distinction between “book” departments and article departments – see Clemens *et al.* “Careers in print: Books, journals, and scholarly publications,” *AJS* 1995.

Competent teaching is a plus.

What kind of job do you want?

If you want a **teaching job**, then without neglecting your research, you need to build a teaching portfolio.

If you want a **research job**, while being a competent teacher, you have to throw everything into research.

How developed should my dissertation be?

- You should have three polished chapters of the dissertation ready – the introduction and two empirical chapters.
- You should be in a position to talk intelligibly about your dissertation – including to scholars outside your subfields.
- You need to be in a position to finish the dissertation by the end of the academic year during which you are applying for jobs.

Is my publication record adequate?

- You should aim to have two journal articles coming out, at least one of which is sole-authored.
 - One might be based on your masters' paper, the second based on a chapter from your dissertation or another research project.
- Many top candidates have many more articles than this.
 - For examples of candidates at top research departments, look at the *c.v.*s of the people we interviewed last year.
- Some top candidates have fewer, but their dissertation holds such promise that this is not a problem.
 - This path is becoming rarer – almost vanishingly so.

What should be on my c.v.?

- Look at the department faculty website, find a model that is reasonable, and follow that model.
- Include a very brief abstract of your dissertation directly before your list of publications.
- Don't try to “pad” your c.v. by putting working papers under publications. It doesn't work. It will only irritate people.
- Your c.v. should be clear, sober, and informative.

The contents of the c.v.

- Education
- Areas of specialization (don't overdo it)!
- Dissertation Abstract (optional but very helpful)
- Honors and Awards
- Publications
- Works under review
- Works in progress
- Conference presentations/invited talks
- Research experience
- Teaching experience
- Memberships in professional associations
- References (names & contact info)

What should my **teaching file** look like?

- Clearly state your teaching philosophy.
- Provide an exhaustive list of the classes you *can* teach, and those you *would like to* teach. Think broadly here.
- This is part of what QEs are for. Go broad here as well.
- You may also include narrative material from your GSI evaluations.
- The importance of the teaching file depends heavily on whether you are applying for a teaching or a research job.
 - If you want a job in a teaching school, you should try to teach your own seminar before getting out of graduate school.

What should be in the cover letter?

- This letter introduces you to the department. It is **extremely** important. It is *not* a pro-forma document. It should be about 3 pages single-spaced.
- The opening should be a broad brush introduction to your **intellectual agenda**. This agenda is broader than your dissertation. It should be **prospective**, not **retrospective**.
- The letter should discuss each writing sample, with particular attention to how each sample fits into your overall intellectual agenda.
 - Think about each piece of writing as evidence for the narrative about your intellectual development that structures your letter.
- For a **research job**, the letter should include a paragraph at the end about teaching. For a **teaching job**, this section may be longer – but remember that you may also be asked for a teaching statement.
- **GET LOTS OF PEOPLE TO READ THE LETTER BEFORE YOU SEND IT!**

Research and Teaching Statements

- If a separate research statement is requested, pull out and expand the material in the cover letter.
- Do the same thing with teaching.
- Do not assume that people will actually read all three documents, so put all the content in the cover letter.

What writing samples should I include in my application?

- The dissertation introduction and two empirical chapters.
- Peer-reviewed publications.
- Highly polished work in progress.

The general rule here is that anything that is unpublished has to be very, very, polished before being included in the file.

Letter Writers: Whom should you ask?

- Faculty members familiar with your research
 - Committee members
 - Non-committee members with whom you've worked closely in the past
- Faculty members familiar with your intellectual strengths through GSRships or co-authorships
- Faculty members familiar with your teaching through GSIships