

# Academic Job Searching Overview and Timeline

Possible academic career paths you may be considering include **professor, instructor, administrator, extension agent and researcher**. Job searches for these types of positions can be time-consuming and complex. While you may love your subject of study and be an expert in many aspects of it, the process of reaching that next step in your career may require a whole different expertise. Now is a good time to start making a game plan for your transition from student to professional scholar.

## Questions to Consider in an Academic Job Search

- Am I willing to relocate? What climate, region, size of town is important?
- Do I want to be primarily a researcher or a teacher, or a mix of both?
- What existing connections do I have with institutions/departments?
- Who is doing the type of work I want to be involved with/to collaborate with?
- Are there certain labs, equipment, focuses that draw me?
- What kind of institution do I want to work for (liberal arts, research, community college, public, religiously affiliated, etc.?)
- Am I interested in alternative paths such as student services, libraries, museums, nonprofits, etc.?

### Note

It's competitive out there. The number of tenure-track jobs available has been falling over the past 50 years.

According to the American Association of University Professors (2018), 73 percent of faculty positions are currently non-tenure track.

If you have faculty track in mind, you'll need to work hard and prepare as much as you can.



## Materials Needed for an Academic Job Search

Positions vary, but **these materials are common**. Start gathering them in advance of your search as they take time to do well. Consider meeting with your career advisor or faculty mentor to get input:

- |                                    |                         |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Curriculum Vitae                | 5. Diversity Statement* |
| 2. Cover Letter                    | 6. Teaching Portfolio** |
| 3. Letters of Recommendation       | 7. Teaching Statement   |
| 4. List of Professional References | 8. Research Statement   |

**\*Diversity Statements:** Though statement prompts vary, generally this is your opportunity to show your commitment to diversity and equity work, whether in the classroom/lab or in other aspects of your life. Topics you might discuss include racism, ableism, sexism, classism, heterosexism—or other dimensions of power and inequality. Incorporating personal experiences as well as how you support marginalized communities in your research, teaching or work is a good place to start. Here are five reflection questions that may help you get started:

1. What have I done in the past to advance diversity and equity work?
2. What beliefs and values drive my commitments for diversity, equity and inclusion?
3. What are specific examples I can demonstrate (e.g., mentoring, service, inclusive pedagogy, community organizing, advocacy, working to redress barriers and systemic inequities)?
4. How have I gone beyond merely accepting difference and really worked for change?
5. How do I plan to continue my diversity, equity and inclusion work in this new role?

**\*\*If a Teaching Portfolio** is requested, pick what you include wisely based on the type of institution and the focus of the role. Show results, your teaching style and your approach. It may include sample syllabi, course lists and descriptions, sample assignments, number of advisees, student evaluations, use of technology, evidence of student learning, hands-on or service-learning projects, etc.

## Academic Job Posting and Candidate Review

Prepare for a **slow-moving process** that is typically tied to the annual academic cycle. During the academic year before a position is posted, the department applies for authorization/funding from university administrators to hire in a particular specialty. This process usually wraps up before the end of that academic year.

- **Most tenure-track positions are going to start popping up in the fall**, but they could come up as early as summer or throughout the year. Keep your eyes open for good opportunities.
- Some universities conduct **interviews at annual professional meetings** as a pre-requisite for on-campus interviews. Find out if this happens in your field. Otherwise, preliminary interviews will often be conducted by phone or video conference in fall or early winter.
- **Often between winter break and early spring (December to March), on-campus interviews for top candidates happen.** Institutions don't usually invest the time to bring you onto campus unless you are on the 2-4 candidate short list.
- **Jobs are often offered and accepted in the spring**, but don't stop looking because candidates back out, new funding pops up and sometimes professors are hired off-cycle.

## Academic Job Search Timeline

**Every grad student's path is unique.** This is just a framework for the steps and timeframes you may encounter along the way. Your path from Oregon State to career is entirely up to you and the opportunities available in your field.

### 18 Months Before Graduation

- **Meet with mentors, advisors and faculty** to talk about your job search strategy.
- **Build your network** through conferences, presentations, collaborations and LinkedIn.
- **Begin researching** post-doc positions and professorships.
- Refine your CV and cover letter using Career Development Center tools and resources.
- **Draft** your teaching and research statements.

### 9-12 Months Before Graduation

- **Start applying** on higher-ed job boards (summer/fall).
- **Tailor your materials** (CV, cover letter, etc.) to specific applications.
- **Request letters of recommendation** and confirm references.
- **Set up as many phone or in-person conversations as possible** to gather information and reconnect with your network. Make your job search known; ask for help!

### 6 Months Before Graduation

- **Follow up personally** on existing applications and continue applying.
- **Prepare for interviews;** ask faculty or people in positions of interest what to expect.
- **Keep networking** and attending field-specific events.

### 0-3 Months Before Graduation

- **Continue applying** and interviewing.
- **Practice salary negotiation** and evaluating offers.
- **Follow up** and thank interviewers for their time.
- **Prepare to defend** your thesis or dissertation and graduate! Yay!

### Finish Line!

- **Start new job, post-doc, research position, etc.** or keep looking and networking until the right thing comes along.
- You can **reach out** to your college-specific career advisor for help for up to 12 months post-graduation, as well as your personal network any time.