

Going on the Job Market

- *When is too early to start thinking about this stuff?* In some sense the answer is “never.” Part of what you need to think about is how you will look when you go on the market.
- *When does it all begin in earnest?* Here the answer is in part dependent upon you and on the results of consultation with your advisor and your committee. My view is that you are ready to go on the market when you and your committee agree that by the summer before your new job would start, you will have defended your thesis. One rule of thumb here is that you have a completed (or nearly completed) draft of your dissertation by the time of the Eastern APA. Ideally, (see next paragraph) you should have a completed draft by the end of the summer (before the Eastern APA) so that your writers will be able to address your work with confidence.

This means that your letter writers will have sufficient information about the status of your dissertation to be able to assert that you *will* be finished. (And, you need to be able to convince interviewers at the convention that you will definitely be done by the time the job starts.) Don't think, however, that you will be getting much work done on the dissertation in the fall before the convention! You will need this time (and more) for putting together your dossier.

- *The Dossier.* Your dossier consists of the following items: Your Curriculum Vitae, summaries of your teaching evaluations, a writing sample, letters of recommendation, transcripts, and a cover letter from you. The philosophy department sends only the letters of recommendation and your transcripts. The rest is sent by you to the departments.
 1. *Curriculum Vitae* This lists your addresses (home, school, and email), your education (including dates of degrees and expected date of Ph. D.), your areas of specialization and areas of competence, the title of your dissertation and your committee members. In addition you should list any publications, presentations, awards and honors, teaching experience, graduate coursework, committee work, professional affiliations, your letter writers names and addresses, *AND* an abstract of your dissertation. [Not necessarily exactly in this order. Samples will be made available.]

- *The Abstract.* This is the most important item on the CV. It is likely one of the first things that will be examined by search committee members at the institutions to which you apply. It needs to be a *short* description of your project—not a chapter by chapter outline—in which you describe the problem you are working on, the solution you offer, and at the same time make it appear that this is really exciting, interesting, and cool. It also *needs* to be accessible to nonexperts in the field. (Not an easy task for anyone. It often requires many rewrites in consultation with placement officer and your supervisor.)
- *Letters of Recommendation.* You need to solicit letters from your advisor and the other members of your committee. (Make sure you solicit them early.) In addition if there is someone else who knows your work and/or your teaching that is useful too. You should aim for about 4 letters. (More than 5 begins to look foolish.) The advisor’s letter is surely the most important. Nevertheless, the others are important too. Typically your advisor talks about your project etc. focusing on research. However, in recent years I have been told that (for certain types of schools at least) the letters should say more about teaching. The undergraduate chair will write an assement of your teaching based upon an analysis of your evaluations. In addition though, you should make arrangements for your advisor and the other members of the committee to visit your classes in the *spring and fall* before writing their letters.
- *Areas of Specialization and Areas of Competence.* You should discuss these with your advisors. Nevertheless, here are some rules of thumb. Your AOS should be those areas in which you would be able, without too much difficulty, to teach graduates seminars. These are the areas in which you are likely to publish. In addition, you should be willing and able to direct graduate dissertations in your AOS. AOC are those areas in which you would be able, without too much difficulty, to teach upper level undergraduate courses. They are areas in which, while perhaps not directing a dissertation, you would feel comfortable being on a dissertation commit-

tee. Your choice of AOS and AOC should be reflected in you list of graduate course work, so you may want to think a bit about this as you are deciding which courses to take. (For everyone: Think about this now.)

2. *The Writing Sample* This is an extremely important component of your dossier. It should typically be a self-contained paper not much longer than 20-25 (double-spaced) pages. Typically it is taken from your dissertation, but is not *just* a chapter. You want it to show an original contribution to the literature. You need to discuss what would be appropriate with your advisor and with the placement director.
 3. *Cover Letter(s)*. These are letters of application that you must send yourself to the positions for which you are applying. There are differences of opinion about what they should say. My view is that they should be somewhat tailored to the institution and the job. That is, you may want to construct two templates—one for schools that primarily emphasize research, and one for schools that primarily emphasize teaching. Given these templates it will not be too hard to tweak them to address features about the particular job advertisement. In addition, these letters should briefly let the people know what your research interests are (perhaps including a brief statement of the problem you address in your dissertation), as well as your teaching interests. Here too you should consult with the placement director and, perhaps, with your advisor as well.
- *Job Talk*. You will need to have a paper ready to present at on-campus interviews. This should be ready by the time of the convention as well. It may be the same as the paper in your dossier, or it might be another paper. This is something you, your advisor, and the placement director need to discuss.
 - *Convention Anxiety*. Conventions can be somewhat scary. It is a good idea to try to attend an Eastern division meeting sometime prior to your actually looking for a job. You may also want to submit a paper to present at this meeting.

A good, if in places somewhat touchy-feely, link from the UWO Career Services is here: <http://www.career.uwo.ca/library/powerpoint/>

AcademicJobSearch.pdf