

Tips for Job Market

Academic

Planning for the AEA trip

- Don't pack interviews in too closely.
- Try to leave 30 min. to an hour between interviews; elevators, traffic, distant hotels, all take their toll (elevators are amazingly slow when thousands of people try to take them at the same time --- e.g., at 3:00 when everyone is moving to their next interview).
- Be eager to take early morning or late day interviews or weird day interviews (this will leave you more time to fit them in without cutting things too close).
- Schedule your most important schools early in the day (people will be fresh and you won't be late).
- Get a flu shot.
- Bring ear plugs.
- Leave an extra copy of your schedule with a friend (just in case you lose the original).
- Do not put your schedule in checked baggage.

What they'll ask you at the interview

- Teaching interests
- Dream course
- How would you teach XYZ ? (what would you bring to the course?)
- Where is your field heading?
- Where are you heading; what's your research agenda; beyond thesis, what are you doing?
- Why haven't you done any empirical (theoretical) work; do you intend to?
- Is your thesis representative of your future work; (OK either way)
- Are you a good teacher?
- How will you interact with feisty business students?
- How do you motivate the crazy assumptions in your papers?
- Do you have any questions about our school? (Optimal answer: I know that your school is great, and that's all that matters right now.)

How to prepare

- Have answers to all of the questions above.
- 2 min summary; and 6 min summary (front-load: get the stuff out before the cut you off).
- Find out where you have to go ahead of time (its easy to suddenly realize that the place is across town, or not publicly known); get info immediately when you arrive; some info will not be easy to obtain.
- Dress in a way that doesn't draw attention to your clothes (women have many options; men should wear jackets and ties; if you are talking to business schools suits are appropriate but not necessary).
- Think about who's on the committee (if that info is available).
- Know all of your work, not just job market paper.

- Be ready for unexpected problems (have city map, maybe cell phone too, water, and a little snack food, e.g., soy milk, snickers bar, powerbar, etc...).
- Every day: shower, shave, fresh shirt.
- Haircut? (personal hygiene matters, particularly at B-schools).
- Bring copies of your job market paper and resume (just in case the committee lost them, or didn't make enough copies for all interviewers). As a rule of thumb bring 20 extra resumes and 15 extra job market papers to the AEA meetings.

In the interview (as in a flyout seminar)

- Be fresh, and friendly.
- Don't be defensive.
- Remember, they're looking for a colleague/teacher/researcher, show them diverse interests, good communication and fun.
- Be yourself, but smooth your rough edges (e.g., suppose you have a tendency to talk over others).
- Don't be needlessly controversial or confrontational (don't say people are irrational, unless you want to spend 10 minutes of your 30 minute interview discussing that assertion).
- Listen well.
- Don't condescend to them, and don't let them intimidate you.
- Don't get flustered, catch your breath and keep on going.
- Be able to say: "good question, I don't know the answer, but I'll think about that one" i.e., don't feel that you have to have an answer for everything.
- Don't think you know what they are thinking; they might be tough, but that doesn't mean they don't like you.
- Don't take anything personally.
- Turn off your cell phone!

Don't be surprised when:

- they cut the time of your interview in half.
- they cut you off in the middle of your description of your work, interests, background, etc....
- people eat during your interview.
- people walk in and out during your interview.
- people reveal that they have no idea who you are and what you do.
- they're tough, to the point of rudeness.
- they argue amongst themselves.
- they yawn (they've had a hard day too).
- they watch TV.

Fly-out advice

- Practice your job talk a *multiple* times.
- Try not to give your job talk for the first time at your "favorite" school(s); if possible give the talk somewhere else first (like a dress rehearsal)

- Try to group trips together (i.e., UCSD and UCLA will be happy to try to coordinate your visits --- saving you time and lowering their costs)
- If “Stanford” has asked you to fly out for an interview, you can call “Berkeley” and propose giving a talk even if “Berkeley” hasn't yet called you for a fly-out. Only do this if “Berkeley” also interviewed you at the meetings. Ask if “Berkeley” is also interested in a fly-out which could be coordinated with “Stanford” to save expenses. This kind of “cold-calling” applies when schools are close geographically and close in quality, and one of the two schools has already contacted you for a fly-out.
- Planes are often delayed, particularly in snowy climes; schedule your travel plans accordingly; do not plan to arrive at midnight if you have a 9 AM meeting the next day. Schedule in big buffers if you can.
- Ask people who interview you (one-on-one during a fly-out) about THEIR research
- Do not “run out of time” in your seminar; pull slides rationally from the middle of the talk if you find that time is short; do NOT race through your critical final slides; e.g., the slides that discuss your central findings, or your estimation results, or your summary slides. Think ahead of time about what slides you will pull if the need arises. Practice.
- If you receive a job offer from school X, and school X is overwhelmingly preferred to school Y, tell school Y about the X offer and give them the opportunity to cancel your fly-out to Y. When you do this be very nice about school Y. Bend over backwards to show respect.
- Remember that your talk is for a general audience of economists; on the other hand don't be afraid to do some technical stuff, but keep non-specialists on board with lots of intuition

Non-Academic

- Know something about the institution/organization/firm that is interviewing you. Spend a bit of time on their website so you understand their output, their audience, and their structure.
- Be able to explain your research in a non-technical way, and be able to offer some implications of your research for policy or for business.
- Be able to demonstrate that you are serious about non-academic jobs. Many non-academic employers will be suspicious of Harvard graduate students and will assume that they are only a back-up if your academic options fall through.
- Be nice. Be engaging. Non-academic employers are more concerned with personality and style than academic employers because non-academic work is usually more collaborative.
- Heed all of the academic job-seeking advice, too.