



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

Frequently Asked Questions about the Job Market (#2)

1. What are the next steps?

- Individual meetings (informal) with Placement Committee week of October 13th.
- CVs must be emailed to Brenda by **Thursday, October 16** for the Department meeting on Tuesday, October 21.
- You will then have until **Monday, October 27** to make revisions and get another copy to Brenda (unless you have made no changes) for the PDF “hard-copy” version that will be posted on the Department website. Your CV should also be posted on your webpage and can be updated.
- Your webpage must be in “good running order” no later than October 27 (this means that your CV and finished papers are posted and “to be posted by [date]” signs are left for other items.)
- Another next step is that you will finish your paper(s). Beyond that, in November (see below) you will be sending out packets. In early December we will discuss interviewing and have practice interviews. Right now the focus is on producing the CV and getting papers in great shape.

2. CV pointers:

- Read your CV over (again and again) for typos and glitches (better yet, give it to a new set of eyes). The same holds for your job market paper (and all other papers you ever produce). Most people do not see the errors in their own work, even those that should be the most obvious (e.g., typos in their own name or the paper title).
- Your Job Market Paper abstract is extremely important. Make certain that the JMP abstract is accessible to any intelligent economist. The same goes for all your other abstracts.

3. Webpage pointers:

- Make absolutely certain that the PDF files that you have created for your CV and paper(s) are readable by others. See if others, on different machines from yours with slightly different software, can read your files.
- A good photo is helpful. Make it professional – no cats perched on your head or silly hats.
- Once you have set up your webpage, let Brenda know so that it can be added to the Economics Department’s graduate student webpage. Note: this is different from the job market page, but it is useful to have your name there as well.

4. How many packets should I send out? What should I include? When should letters go out and how are the letters and packets coordinated? What about on-line applications?

- Before you apply on-line you will compile a list of places from JOE (or other sources, see below). You should make certain that your advisors and/or references know the list—certainly the top places on it. If your advisor does not feel comfortable writing a letter for you to the 2nd top department in the nation, then do not apply there. Your letters to the other places will probably be stronger.
- You should plan to apply the first two weeks in November. Anything sent after Thanksgiving will probably arrive too late for some departments or agencies or institutions that have already made decisions about their first-tier interviews. Most departments begin reading packets as they arrive and are in fairly complete form (i.e., your materials and two letters of reference).

- Communicate with your advisors and faculty assistants regarding the timing of your applications. Their letters should follow shortly. It is not good if their letters get there before your packets do or too much after.
- Your packet includes: (1) your CV, (2) paper(s), and (3) a generic cover letter (but see the exceptions below). Your papers should include your key job market paper, but also any additional paper(s) that is related to it, or shows your ability in a related field, or shows strength in some other way. Any paper you include should be very strong. If the second paper is considerably weaker than your job market paper, you might not want to include it.
- The cover letter should be brief and to the point. (There is an exception that we will discuss next.) Say something straightforward, like: “I am applying for the position of X as advertised in the Y issue of JOE. I have included a copy of my CV, my job market paper “Blah, Blah, and Blah,” and another paper, “X, Y, Z.” My letters of reference will arrive shortly. I will be attending the AEA meetings in Philadelphia and am available all days for interviews.”
Alternatively, if the place has requested your packet you will want to change the letter and state clearly that: “As requested by Professor Glibster, I am enclosing my CV and job market paper” or some such thing that indicates that your materials were solicited.
 - One exception to the simple, straightforward cover letter advice concerns liberal arts colleges. Others are places that generally do not aim as high as Harvard students and places that are advertising unique positions. Liberal arts colleges expect you to demonstrate an interest in their school and in teaching. Your letter should reflect your interest in the school and in teaching. The same goes for places that might think your interest is not credible.
- In November and December you may be contacted by departments, organizations, and agencies for your packet. In some cases, you may already have sent your packet. If so, you will want to contact the staff assistant in charge and explain the circumstances. This happens frequently, so do not worry. Some places might contact you very early—before you are ready to send out your packet. Tell them that your packet will arrive soon (you can give a date) and ask if there is any deadline.
- You should apply to as many places as possible, at a very minimum 40-50. Apply to any job that you would take if you had no other offers. Do not apply to a job that you would not take even if you had no other job offers (i.e. if you would prefer unemployment to the job).

5. What resources should I use to compile my list of places?

- JOE (all months) is the main resource. Make sure you check in September and December. Some positions are only posted once, and some are posted last minute.
- In addition to EJM there are two other common websites: academicjobsonline and interfolio. AJO is fine if a bit antiquated, interfolio is confusing and opaque. Sign up early to see how the system works. Also, you don't need to pay for interfolio. Just sign up for the standard option.
- Our website has other links, such as the Chronicle of Higher Education. Some business schools do not advertise in JOE but do advertise in the Chronicle. You can also check the websites of various institutions, agencies, and departments.
- Solicitations sent to us directly will be emailed to the Job Market List Serv

6. What happens to the CV PDF and what about those interested in the non-academic market?

- The CV PDF packet is on the Department web-site. Most institutions know that they can find it there. We do not mail the PDF packet. But we will mail letters to our previous list of prospective employers with abbreviated information on our job market candidates and the URL. Our list contains a very large number of universities (also in Europe), colleges, business schools, public policy schools, all the Feds, most of the larger consulting firms, firms on Wall Street that hire economists, U.S. government agencies that have hired in the past, and so on. We are constantly revising it and have added many business schools. Almost all of the non-academic employers of Ph.D. economists are in the group.

- The department also accommodates recruiters such as the IMF, World Bank, the Board, and the Fed.

7. Who sees to it that I get interviews?

- The interview is that “foot in the door” moment. Without the interview at the meetings, there is a low probability that the school or institution will consider you later. At this point, the interview is the objective and getting the packets out (either solicited or not) is the “bait.” Although it varies by field, you should aim for at least 10 to 12 interviews at the meetings. If by the end of the second week of December you have fewer, you should see your advisor(s) asap and tell one of us.
- You get interviews because you applied for a job and/or because your advisor(s) has suggested to someone in his/her field to interview you and/or because the recruiting chair of some institution called one of us. Chances are that you will not get an interview unless you applied for the job or if your packet was requested because of some intervention by us or by your advisor.

8. When can I pull off the market?

- Ideally before the Placement Meeting on October 21 but certainly no later than the end of October – when the website goes live. After the Job Market meeting, the cost rises quite a bit. If you decide to pull off after then, you run various risks. Do your soul-searching now. When and if you do pull off, tell us and Brenda asap. We will delete you from the Harvard “grid,” which is the full list of our job market candidates including the embedded URL’s to your home page if you have been added. Also note that the Department cannot provide placement services to people who were “on the market” but decided late in the year that it was not the best year for them.

*With thanks to Claudia Goldin for allowing us to update this memo from those used in previous years.