

Notes on the Economics Job Market Process

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These are some notes from my and my peer's experiences on the economics job market. I've tried to include things that are helpful but maybe unknown or not talked about in other job market guides.

A few disclaimers:

- These notes are predominantly centered around the academic job market, but I think some of these points are applicable to every type of market.
- I was on the market during the 2025-2026 academic year, which was a weird/off/hard year to be on the market, so some of these comments may be colored by that

Pre-Market Considerations

- Communication with your advisor/dissertation committee/placement director is really important during the market
 - o They will be able to direct you to jobs that are well suited for you, give advice about interview and flyouts, and help you negotiate offers
 - o You'll likely need to be even more communicative with your advisor than you have been pre-market to ensure that the market goes as smoothly as possible
- Having a group of people who are also going through the market at the same time as you is really helpful
 - o They can help benchmark when you need to get things done/out/submitted
 - o It's really nice to have a group of people that you can vent to if needed
 - (Shout out to my group who helped me revise this document!)

Application Stage

- Gathering/Organizing Job Postings
 - o I kept a spreadsheet of jobs
 - Make sure to include information on the department and job title since institutions may be hiring in different departments or for different jobs
 - I created a separate sheet for my priority applications/schools
 - My advisor used this to keep track of those applications
 - o After I submitted the application to my priority schools, I sent an email to my advisor with the link to the department's faculty page and any notes on who I knew in the department and why this position is a priority for me

- You may also want to directly find the email addresses of people you want your advisor to email
- If possible, try to save a pdf of the job posting
 - Will be helpful for interviews especially if they take down the posting
- I checked the job posting sites often to make sure that I didn't miss anything
 - July – September: Checked twice a week
 - October – end: Checked every day
 - Job deadline keep getting earlier and earlier so I would start looking at the end of the summer
- Note the difference between the deadline and the review start date
 - Try to get all applications in by the review start date
 - There will also be schools that don't give a date ("review is ongoing" or "review will begin immediately")
 - Make sure you get those apps in sooner rather than later. You don't want to miss a job posting that gets closed unexpectedly
 - Also the date listed in the metadata on some AEA JOE posting was not correct, so make sure to read the posting to find the correct date
- Application Materials
 - If possible, get the first draft of your statements done over the summer
 - This helps with the earlier application dates (which can start in September)
 - I used Overleaf/LaTeX to make my documents, partially so I could easily customize the cover letter with the name/address of the university
 - I've also been told it's a signal
 - I made a note of who the search committee chair is and addressed my cover letter to them
 - I'm not sure how much this helped, but it was one way I signaled interest by customizing the cover letter
 - Send your main materials to various people to get feedback
 - If you're targeting a specific type of institution, make sure you find someone from that type of institution to read it
 - I did this in August so I would have some time to revise the material before the first application deadlines
 - Specific application materials that I prepared
 - CV
 - Academic and Non-Academic
 - I includes the abstracts of my working papers in the academic one and had a separate section for my job market paper

- Cover Letter
 - Generic academic (1 ¼ pages), liberal arts schools, public policy schools, teaching, post-docs, nonacademic, diversity focused
- Teaching Statement
 - General (1 ½ pages), liberal arts, diversity-focused, public health, policy, 1 page version
- Research Statement
 - General (2 pages), 1 page version
- Diversity statement (1 page)
- Reference List
 - Includes names, positions/affiliations, emails, phone number, mailing address, relationship to you
- Teaching Portfolio
 - Full portfolio – list of courses taught, sample syllabus, student/faculty evaluations
 - Teaching effectiveness – list of courses taught, student/faculty evaluations
- Transcripts
 - Unofficial undergrad and grad school transcripts
- Other
 - Combined research and teaching (3 pages)
 - Combined research and teaching (1 page)
- Applying
 - I prioritize applications by review start dates, but I know some people who immediately applied to their priority schools first
 - Set up profiles on the major application platforms
 - AEA JOE, Econ Job Market, Interfolio
 - Make sure your website/socials are up to date
 - I definitely noticed an uptick in my website traffic

Interview Stage

- Preparing for the Interview
 - I wore the same blouse and sweater for every interview
 - I had tested this outfit to make sure that it worked on camera, and I didn't have to think about what to wear before the interview
 - I wore under-eye cover up, mascara, and a natural lipstick for every interview

- Mostly I did this because it made me less self-conscious during the interviews (since you can always see a little picture of yourself)
 - I set up my desk in front of two shelves that I had textbooks and econ books, my undergrad diploma, and a few other decorations on
 - People do notice your background especially if it looks nice because they have been on zoom all day long
 - I had Christmas lights up for some of the interviews and got several comments on how lovely they looked
 - People also commented on some of the art I had on my shelves too
 - Technology I had for the interviews
 - External web cam
 - Cheap small plug-in earbuds (way more reliable than Bluetooth)
 - Ring light that clipped to my external monitor
 - 7 minutes before the interview, I started a song that I really liked and would help me excited for the interview
 - 2-3 minutes before the interview, I logged into the interview portal (zooms/teams/other)
 - Sometimes if you login too early the interviewers may miss the notification
- During the Interview
 - General types of questions that were asked
 - Research
 - Tell us about your job market paper
 - This is where I would give the spiel (about 2-3 minutes)
 - I would end the answer by asking if there were any questions or offering to go into more detail about the data, methodology, and results
 - I was also asked a version of this where I was asked to explain it like I was talking to undergrads
 - Tell us about your work
 - I would start with my job market paper and then do a sentence or two on my other papers
 - The interviewers would often interrupt me during this question to ask follow up questions about something I said
 - What kind of what do you see yourself doing in the future?
 - Where do you intend to publish your JMP/future work?
 - How do you manage teaching and research at the same time?

- Teaching
 - What kind of classes have you taught before?
 - What kind of classes would you like/are prepared to teach?
 - Prior to the interview I would look at the courses offered in the department and find some I could teach as well as new courses I could offer
 - What is your teaching philosophy?
 - How would you teach to a diverse population of students or a population of students with different levels of preparation?
 - Tell us about a time when you struggled with teaching/a mistake you made while teaching?
 - What are your biggest challenges around teaching right now?
 - How would you transition your teaching to graduate students?
- Service
 - What type of service have you done during grad school?
 - What kind of service would you be interested in doing here?
- Other
 - Why XX school/why do you want to be here?
 - I got asked this at upwards of 80% of interviews
 - What is your experience working with/advising undergrads?
 - What is your proudest accomplishment?
- Questions I asked (most interviews left about 5 minutes for my questions at the end):
 - What is the timeline of the search process going forward and are there any members of the search committee that couldn't join us?
 - What/is there any support offered to new faculty both in terms of resources and mentoring?
 - Is there an infrastructure for involving students in your research or is it more ad hoc?
 - What is your favorite part about being in the department or what do you think is unique about the department?
 - People loved this question and if I only had time for one this is the one I asked. You get a lot of info from this question about the atmosphere of the department as well as some of the resources faculty have
- After the Interview
 - I immediately took notes on what stood out to me about the schools/interview

- Zoom interviews tend to run together so it's good to have notes in case you get a flyout
- You may also want to note which kinds of questions or specific things that individuals asked you about; will allow for better follow-ups during a flyout
- I sent thank you emails to everyone in the interview and any members of the search committee that couldn't attend
 - I wrote the emails right after the interview and then set up schedule-send for 10am the next calendar day

Flyout Interviews

- Before the Flyout
 - Preparing for the flyout
 - To prep for the faculty meetings, especially if I didn't have a schedule, I prepped a one to two sentence summary of the work for each faculty member in the department
 - I linked each person's website or profile too so that once I got more information on who I was meeting, I could do more research
 - In my prep document, I listed the courses that I could teach in the department and the degrees that are offered by the department
 - If you're interviewing at a business school it may also be useful to look at the business core classes to see what you could teach
 - I came up with several questions to ask during faculty meetings
 - What I Packed
 - I had set outfits for the flyouts so I wouldn't have to think about what to pack
 - Comfier dress pants and a sweater for the flight there
 - Professional dress code for the flyout day
 - I wore a business dress, blazer, and heels
 - Another business casual outfit in case there's time you for you to change before dinner and faculty mention that you can/should change
 - I also had a backup suit option in case I wasn't able to wash my flyout clothes before the next interview
 - Other things I brought to the flyout that were so helpful
 - Oil absorbing sheets that don't smudge makeup (it's a long day)
 - Hotel snacks

- You never know if you're going to get stuck somewhere or if you're going to be hungry after the day
 - I personally always go with a mix of salty and sweet snacks
 - Band-aids
 - Ibuprofen
 - Power bank charger
 - Reusable water bottle
 - Cough drops
 - I did not prep during the flights. I tried to make sure everything was ready before hand
 - I tried to relax (read, watch tv) during the flight instead
- During the Flyout
 - Job market presentation
 - I planned essentially for an hour to an hour and ½ time slot
 - I had about 30-40 minutes of content leaving lots of time for questions/discussion
 - I made my presentation in Overleaf beamer (LaTeX)
 - I've heard it's a signal so I did it
 - Have a notebook with you to take notes on people's suggestions/questions
 - I had the presentation on a flash drive, saved to my laptop, and saved to the cloud
 - You can also ask the person coordinating the flyout if they want you to email the presentation
 - Faculty Meetings
 - Each meeting tends to consist of two parts
 - Standard interview questions about your research, especially papers other than your job market paper
 - Time for you to ask questions about the department/position or the person's work
 - I tended to ask more about the department and their experience
 - When you're meeting with a junior person it's a good opportunity to ask about their transition into the position
 - Ask about what service they have done, classes they have taught, and if they have mentors in the department
 - Meetings with students

- You may meet with undergrad or graduate students
- If meeting with grad students, this is a good chance to get their opinion on the department and their interactions with the faculty
- If meeting with undergrads you can ask about how much they interact with the faculty and what their expectations are for classes
 - You can also ask what they hope to see in a new hire in the department
- The students may also be asking you questions about your research, teaching, and mentoring style
- Get their emails so you can send thank you/follow up emails to them
- Meals with faculty/students
 - These tend to be more informal though I did have some conversations about research during a few of these
 - Follow the lead of the other people you are at lunch/dinner with to get a sense of what to order
 - Always accept the drink/dessert menu but don't push if people don't ask again
 - I tended to order something that had a small chance of spilling
 - Especially important for breakfast and lunch
- After the Flyout
 - I sent an email to everyone in the department
 - I wrote specific follow-up emails to everyone that I met
 - For others that I didn't meet, I sent an email offering to set up a virtual meeting if that wanted to chat

Ways I Stayed (Sort of) Sane During the Market

- Try to keep on top of deadlines
 - I tried to get everything in earlier than the deadline to make sure there weren't any stressful periods waiting for faculty to submit recommendations letters
 - This also meant that when I got to the big deadline (10/1, 10/31, 11/1, 11/15) that had a lot of applications due, I wasn't overwhelmed by volume
 - This also let me have weekends where I didn't have to submit anything
- Have other things going on
 - I was still involved in a research team during the market. I wasn't the one doing the major data analysis, but it was so helpful to have a period of time each week to talk about research
 - It reminded me why I was doing this

- Lean into hobbies & friendships to give you a break and something else to think about
 - During the fall semester, I planned a Halloween party, participated in a craft fair in December, and started an exercise challenge
 - I need to be doing something that was both relaxing and would allow me to see tangible progress occurring
- The worst time of the market for my mental health was January and early February
 - This was the time that I was (or more often wasn't) hearing about flyouts and it was harder not to take it personally after an interview
 - During this time I was pretty open with my family, friends, advisor, and therapist about how much I was struggling
 - Unfortunately, this feeling didn't really go away until the market was done for me
 - Hopefully it helps to know that this is a hard time for everyone

Final Thoughts

- The market is really hard and a lot of it is out of your control
 - Especially when you end up in a "bad market year"
 - It's hard not to take decisions/rejections personally, but it really is not an evaluation of you as a person
 - Most of it is so random
- Everyone tends to have a different point of the market that is the most challenging for them
 - I found it was actually really helpful to be open to talking about the market with my other friends who were also applying. It sort of felt like they were the only people who could truly understand at points.
- What you want in a job may change throughout the market and that's okay
 - There's so much about jobs that you can't know until you're interviewing with people at those places