SLATE Job Search Workshop:
Interviewing and Negotiating

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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Outline

1. Interview process and format  
   (Rebecca Foote)

2. Interview tips  (Melissa Bowles)

3. Getting a job offer: Process  (Andrea Golato)

4. Getting a job offer: Negotiation  
   (Numa Markee, Kiel Christianson)

5. Perspective of a recent job seeker and 
   considerations for dual-career couples  
   (Jill Jegerski)
Interview Process: Timeline

- **August – November**
  - Job ads published
- **October – December**
  - Applications due
- **November – February/March**
  - Interviews
Types of Interviews

• First-round
  – Phone/Skype interviews
  – Conference (MLA / LSA) interviews

• Campus interviews
Phone/Skype Interviews

• Search committee will contact you to set up a time for the interview
  – *Keep in mind that time zones may be different*
  – Try to avoid using your cell phone if possible
  – Choose a location that will be quiet, where you can have your notes on the position, your research, and your teaching laid out in front of you
  – Ask who will be present during the interview
Phone/Skype Interviews

• Format
  – Speaker phone or Skype
  – Head of the search committee typically the one who calls
  – Informs you who is present during the interview
  – May be the only person asking questions, or each member may ask some
  – If position is in a foreign language department, may ask some questions in that language
  – Lasts 30 minutes to 1 hour
Conference Interviews

• Search committee will (probably) contact you ahead of time to set up the time and location
  – Conference may have designated location for interviews (‘cattle call room’), or may be in hotel room of the committee member(s)
  – Not usually whole search committee
  – Lasts around 30 minutes
  – Links to interview information on conference sites
    • MLA
    • LSA
Campus Interviews

• Almost always preceded by phone or conference interview
  – Top 3 or 4 candidates invited to campus
• Search committee will contact you to invite you to campus and to schedule the visit
  – You may be asked to pay for the airfare and hotel and be reimbursed, or they may pay
• You will be provided with a detailed schedule in advance of the visit
  – Make sure to find out how you will get from the airport to the hotel, and from the hotel to campus
Campus Interviews

• Typical components of the campus interview
  – Job talk
    • May be conference presentation length or longer
    • Be sure to pitch it toward your audience!
  – Meeting with search committee
  – Meetings with department head and dean
  – Meeting with department members not on the search committee
  – Meeting with students
  – Attend and/or teach a class
  – Campus tour
  – Meals with committee and department members
Interview Tips

• Preparation is key!
• Find out about the institution, department, and colleagues beforehand.
• Ask in your department for a mock interview if at all possible before your first ‘real’ interview.
• Rehearse/practice answering common questions. This helps you look professional and will calm your nerves!
1. Be prepared.

- Be sure that you have researched the school.
- You should know who's on the staff, who teaches what and what programs are offered.
- Prepare notes for each interview that records research for the job, analysis of the needs. Include the questions you have for the committee.
2. Be engaging.
   - Establish your candidacy in the first 5 minutes of the interview.
   - Look people in the eye.
   - Answer questions succinctly.
   - Have ready good snappy short and medium length answers to the standard questions (more on that in a moment). - DO NOT drone on for 15 minutes about the minutiae of your dissertation.
3. Be yourself.
- Don't try to hide who you are.
- Highlight your interests and experiences that make you a good fit for the position.
4. Dress professionally.
   Men: Business suit or shirt and tie.
   Women: Business suit or other business attire.
Interview Tips

Typically, interviews will follow this general format:
1. Questions about research
2. Questions about teaching
3. Questions about service
4. They'll tell you about the school and the job
5. They'll let you ask questions (you always should!)
Common interview questions

Research

- Describe your research./Tell us about your dissertation. (Have a good articulate rap down pat in short and longer versions, for experts and non-experts).
  - Be sure to state up front how far along you are in the process (“I have written X of Y chapters, my advisor has approved X of Y chapters, my defense is set for X date.”)
• How will you go about revising your dissertation for publication?
• What you've said is all very interesting, but doesn't work in your field sometimes tend to border on the (choose adjective)?
• What is the broader significance of your research?
• This is a publish or perish institution with very high standards for tenure review--what makes you think you would be able to earn tenure here?

• Tell us about your research program. What are you working on currently? (now that you've completed your doctoral work)? What do you plan to look at next?
Teaching

• What is your basic teaching philosophy?
• How would you teach...?
  – basic service courses in your field
  – any of the courses on your CV that you say you can teach/have taught
• What courses would you like to teach if you had your druthers? How would you teach them?
  – Know what books/readings you would use and how you would structure the course.
• Which text would you use (have you used) for the Intro to Linguistics/SLA?
• Be prepared to talk about several courses, after having sized up the institution's needs.
• Be prepared to talk about teaching basic service course(s) (language courses and possibly even general courses).
• Be ready to talk in detail about an innovative course or two that you think the Department might really go for--something new and within your expertise.
• Your degree is from a prestigious research university--what makes you think you would like to (or even would know how to) teach in a small liberal arts college?

• At our college, teaching is the first priority. Do you like teaching? Would you survive (and thrive) under those circumstances?
  – What experience do you have teaching or learning in such a setting?
• Why do you especially want to teach at Small College or University X? How do you see yourself contributing to our department?
Service Questions

• (for small colleges) We conceive of our campus as one large community. What non- or extra-academic activities would you be interested in sponsoring or participating in?
• We have a study abroad program in Y. What experience or interest do you have in working with such a program?
• What kinds of service have you engaged in as a graduate student?
“Do you have any questions for us?”

- Always have some questions prepared, even though you may think of more as part of the interview.
- You can ask about:
  - teaching load
  - student population
  - courses the successful candidate would be likely to teach
  - things not readily available on the website
Questions that should not be asked…

- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Whether you have children
- Religious beliefs/background
  - Though for institutions with a religious affiliation, it is quite common to be asked something like this:
  - “You've seen our (religious) mission statement. How would you see yourself contributing to our mission and campus atmosphere?”
Getting a Job Offer – Process
Timeline of a Search

- Job advertisement placed (Sept. – Nov.)
- Candidates apply (Sept.- Dec.)
- Job Search Committee reads applications and selects semi-finalists (usually 10-15)
- Search Committee Chair emails or calls to invite to Skype / MLA / ACTFL / LSA Interview
  - First rejections go out 😞
- Candidates interview (Nov.-Jan.) & send thank-you notes
• 3 finalists selected
  – Either by Search Committee or by entire faculty
  – Search Committee may need to seek approval from Dean
  – Other candidates typically kept as alternates
• Search Committee Chair will invite either all three candidates to campus or one at a time
  – Be prepared to pay for visit up front
• Candidate(s) visit campus
  – Ask about timeline for the search
  – Send thank-you note after visit
• Search Committee will seek input from those who met candidate(s)
• Search Committee alone or in consultation with entire faculty will rank candidates and make recommendation for hire to Chair of the Department
  – May need approval from Dean
• Department Chair will contact top-ranked candidate via email or phone to make the offer.
  – Other candidates may or may not be told that they are not ranked first.
  – Other candidates typically kept as alternates
• Do **NOT** accept the offer. Instead, thank them, say you are excited and say you will call them back.

• Candidate calls other schools to ask about status
• Offer either verbal, via email text, or as faxed/emailed contract
  – If offer is verbal, write to Chair and summarize offer as you understand it, ask for clarification
• Candidate should be given 2 weeks to consider
• Candidate gathers facts, compares offers, compiles list of items to be negotiated
• Candidate calls Dept. Chair to negotiate (everything at once!)
• Department Chair will act not happy, may have to contact Dean
• Department Chair will call / email with counter-offer (or offer will remain unchanged)
• Candidate can use remaining time to consider
• Candidate calls to accept the offer
• Department Chair / Dean will send written contract
• Candidate signs the contract and mails it back
• Candidate withdraws from other schools
• Search Committee chair will send out remaining rejection letters.
Resources

Negotiation:
http://www.grad.illinois.edu/careerservices/negotiation
http://www.grad.illinois.edu/video

Job search process in general:
http://chronicle.com/section/First-Time-on-the-Market-/146/