



The PhD Job Market

Fall Meeting:

Interviews

Outline of talk

1. Job market preparation

1. How are things going?

2. Interview preparation:

1. Scheduling
2. Office/computer
3. Typical questions

3. Mock interviews with SES faculty

How are things going?

- At this point:
 - You should have your job market packet ready:
 - Job market paper
 - CV
 - Website
 - Research statement
 - Teaching statement
 - Everything reviewed by your advisor.
 - Many applications sent out, or ready to be submitted.
 - JOE/AEA signals.

Scheduling interviews

- Department secretaries will contact you to schedule an interview.
 - With a phone call, asking you for a convenient time.
 - With an email, or link to a scheduling website.
- Be professional in your email and phone communications.

Preparing for your interview

- Gather information about your interviewers.
- Know as much as possible from the school.
 - Undergraduate and graduate programs, number of students (approx.), type of courses offered in Econ.
 - Number of faculty and type of research.
- At the university level: location, mission, religion (if it applies), school size, etc.

Preparing for your interview

- Make sure your camera and laptop work well.
- Check your office
 - No trash or pizza boxes on the background.
 - No distractions.
 - Coordinate with your office mates to avoid interruptions.
 - Dress professionally, as if the interview was in-person.
 - Practice!!

Interview questions – Research

- Most interviews start with the same question:
 - “Tell us about your job market paper”
 - This answer should be relatively general, about 5 minutes long; but be ready to continue, expanding if they don’t interrupt you with questions.
 - (More about this in a moment.)
- Other interviews start with:
 - “Tell us about your dissertation”
 - Shorter answer: about 1 minute long, getting immediately after into the details of your JMP.

Interview questions – Research

- Know your “spiel” well.
 - But don’t be robotic.
 - What’s the big picture?
 - How does your research contribute to the literature?
 - What are the economic forces behind your results?
 - What is your identification strategy?
 - Clarify the key endogeneity concern addressed by your identification strategy.
 - How did you come up with this research question?
 - What challenges did you find?

Interview questions - Research

- Don't be surprised if an interviewer interrupts you with:
 - And so, what?
 - Why should we care?
- You just need to clarify:
 - how the paper contributes to the literature and
 - what are your policy implications.
 - After that, you can circle back and keep describing your paper in more detail.

Interview questions – Research

- Where do you plan to publish your work?
 - Be confident but realistic. (Probably you already talked about journal outlets for your JMP with your advisor).
- Tell us about other chapters in your dissertation.
- Tell us about this working paper that you list in your CV...

Interview questions – Research

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 - Be confident but realistic. (Probably you already talked about journal outlets for your JMP with your advisor).
- Tell us about other chapters in your dissertation.
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Interview questions – Research

- Which paper is closest to your research?
- In this literature:
 - What do you think are the most interesting contributions recently.
 - Where do you think the literature is headed, or what are the main research questions that are yet to be tackled.
 - What will be the focus of your research over the next 5 years, or what's your research agenda.

Interview questions – Research

- Be prepared for questions.
 - Some may be anticipated,
 - Others can be quite unexpected.
- Really listen to all their questions.
 - If you don't fully understand their main point, feel free to say
 - "I think that what you are asking is..."
rephrasing their question to confirm you got their point.
 - Then, answer it.

Interview questions – Teaching

- What's your teaching experience.
 - Start by saying which courses you taught as main instructor.
 - Perhaps mention the number of students, whether it was in-person or online, and some teaching innovation if possible.
- Which two classes would you most like to teach at our institution?
 - Why?
 - Which textbook would you use and why?
 - Which topics would you cover?
 - What approach would you follow?

Interview questions – Teaching

- We'll need the candidate to teach a course on X.
 - How would you teach this course?
- How comfortable are you teaching large classes?
- How would you teach to non-Econ majors?
- What's your approach to students using AI in homework, or in written assignments?
- What is your teaching philosophy?

Interview questions – Last minutes

- What do you have to offer our department?
 - Mention 3 things: research, teaching, and team player or collegial environment.
- Why did you apply to this position?
- Who on this faculty might you collaborate with in research?
 - Why this person?
- What do you like about this department/town/region?
 - Know about the department, the location, and region.

Interview questions – Last minutes

- If they ask “Do you have any questions for us?” you can always politely ask about the search timeline.
 - Alternatively, you can ask about what they find to be the most appealing aspect of their job or location.
- More information on Cawley’s advise to PhD students entering the job market
 - except for the handshake when entering the room!.
- And on this AEA job market committee webinar:
- <https://www.aeaweb.org/joe/communications/video/2023/webinar-nov>.

What to expect next?

What to expect, November

- **November:**

1. Nov. 5th:

1. Send written answers to a list of typical interview questions.
2. We will provide feedback in about two weeks.

2. Nov. 18th-22nd: Mock interviews.

1. Two SES faculty in each interview.
2. We will try to have both experts in your field and faculty members in other fields, to mimic the typical conditions on interviews.
3. All mock interviews will be via Zoom, since all AEA interviews are via Zoom nowadays.
4. You must send written answers before Nov. 5th to participate in mock interviews.

What to expect, Nov.-Dec.

- **Late November-Early December:**

1. Seminars, already scheduled.
2. Take them seriously and professionally.
 1. They will help you better prepare for a campus visit regardless of how polished your JM paper is.
3. Your slides must be reviewed by:
 1. Your advisor and a peer review.
 2. Then, please send us the slides (with the peer-review rubric) at least 10 days before your seminar.
4. We will meet with you after your seminar to go over it, with detailed feedback.