

University of Oregon Philosophy Department Placement GUIDE

The Placement Committee has the following members for 2011-1012.

Naomi Zack (Chair); Rocio Zambrana (Director of Graduate Travel Awards*); Peter Warnek, (Winter and Spring 2012)

Lucy Schultz (Graduate Rep); Ted Toadvine (ex officio).

*Travel funding policies and applications are on-line under “graduate student resources.”

SCHEDULE AND EVENTS

Spring 2011

A Placement Workshop for those going on the job market Fall 2011 or Fall 2012.

Fall 2011

Advisement with Placement Committee members during their office hours and by appointment. Students are welcome to get “second opinions” on tricky questions.

Zack-338PLC, F. 3-5, nzack@uoregon.edu

Zambrana-331PLC, Tues 2-4. zambrana@uoregon.edu

Mock interviews (video feedback available), *arranged by placement committee for week 11 of Fall term and thereafter by request.*

Winter 2012

Mock Job Talks (video feedback available), arranged by the Placement Committee before you have an on-campus interview, usually in January or February and thereafter by request.

A career workshop to discuss publication, including the dissertation as a resource

Jobs in Philosophy

Getting a job in philosophy requires preparation, planning, and sometimes perseverance. Your Dissertation advisor and committee members know your intellectual and pedagogical merits, best, but all faculty members are committed to the successful placement of all students. The Placement Committee serves to explain, encourage, and facilitate job searches, both generally, and individually for each student. This *guide* provides some general information that each applicant can tailor to unique needs and goals. *We strongly recommend that you contact at least one member of the Placement Committee if you are seeking a job for Fall 2012 or even Fall 2013.*

Different Kinds of Philosophy Jobs

*The gold standard is a tenure-related job or position, also called a “**tenure-track**” job or position. But you may not get one the first year you apply for jobs and may instead begin with a visiting position, or even adjunct work. A postdoc can be as good or better than a tenure related job to prepare for a research career that will begin with a tenure-related job after that.*

Tenure related jobs provide continuing employment once tenure is granted and may be in: research institutions (where publishing is of primary importance for career advancement); institutions that emphasize teaching (and may require heavy teaching loads, e.g., more than 5 courses a year); and community colleges. They have a distinctive application and hiring schedule, from fall to spring.

Non-tenure related jobs include *adjunct positions* where each course is individually paid for (at a lower rate than tenure-related jobs) and *visiting or one-year positions* that pay less than tenure-related positions, but more than adjunct positions. There may be advertisements for adjunct jobs at any time in the calendar year. Visiting or one-year positions are closer to the tenure-related application and hiring schedule.

Post-doc positions are usually for one or two years, pay about the same as an instructor position and are primarily opportunities to pursue research beyond the work of the Dissertation. They have a slightly different yearly job-seeking cycle than tenure-related jobs and their requirements are specified in advertisements for them.

Academic jobs in fields other than philosophy will have a different yearly job-seeking cycle than those in philosophy and will require resources not mentioned here. For employment resources, consult the websites of the professional organizations of the fields that interest you.

The Job CYCLE, the JFP and the APA

The tenure-related job cycle starts in early to mid October, with the publication of the first *Jobs for Philosophers* by the APA, listing positions for the following Fall, continuing with additional JFP publications throughout the Winter, Spring, and into the Summer. Interviews for the vast majority of jobs in philosophy in the U.S are held at the **Eastern APA, which always meets December 27-30 in Boston, New York, Washington, D. C., or Atlanta.** Few interviews are held at the Midwest or Pacific APA

meetings, because they occur at the very end of the job cycle and are not as well attended. If you are not a member of the APA, you should join and select the options for receiving the JFP and email updates on available jobs. The APA also maintains a **Job Seekers' Database**, where you can post your C.V. and additional information about yourself as a job candidate. The APA national office is at **www.apaonline.org** As the main professional organization for US philosophers, the APA published its own Placement Brochure, 2003 and 2005, which is appended to this document.

The first 'cut' in all applicants for any given job results in those (5-20) who are interviewed at the Eastern APA meeting. The second 'cut' results in the candidates (2-4) invited for **on-campus visits**, which are usually held **between January and March**. One person gets the job. **Job offers** that began with advertisements in the Fall are typically made in **March or April**.

Non-tenure related jobs in philosophy and in other disciplines are often listed in the Chronicle of Higher Education. <http://chronicle.com/section/Jobs/61/>

Community College jobs require selecting a geographical area and going to the employment sections of the websites of these institutions, for job postings. Another approach is to contact by email, snail mail, phone, or personal visit, the chair of an appropriate humanities department with a version of your application materials that is a good fit for courses already listed. It should be noted that many community college jobs have the equivalent of tenure and pay salaries comparable to those in four-year schools.

PREPARING YOUR JOB APPLICATION 'Dossier.'

It is prudent to begin assembling and constructing the materials for your job application during the spring before the fall you will apply for jobs. You will need: a CV, commitments to write letters of recommendation, a writing sample, a generic letter of intent, a two page abstract of your dissertation, copies of your transcripts, a teaching portfolio, descriptions of research projects following your dissertation or a narrative of future research plans, and an interview wardrobe.

When should you apply for jobs? Some positions require a complete PhD but many accept students who are ABD, provided that they will have a PhD when they begin their jobs. This means that if you apply in the Fall, you should have a substantial amount of your dissertation complete so that you can finish it that academic year, if you get a job. Some schools will wait for the second year of employment for a successful candidate to have a PhD. This creates extreme stress at the beginning of an academic career: the combined demands of moving, teaching, being a colleague in a tenure-related job, finishing the dissertation, and working on publications toward tenure.

Dossier Contents/Application Materials

You will send out or ask Interfolio to send out a dossier for each of your job applications. These are the dossier contents, not all of which may go out to every job.

1. CV Order: education, academic employment, AOS and AOC, honors and awards, publications, courses taught, service. **Append a one-page dissertation abstract to your CV.** Note: There are perfectly acceptable, different versions of the order of CV entries, but the consensus seems to be that page one includes: education, AOS, AOC, Honors and Awards.

2. Cover Letter: A generic letter of interest that will be filled in for specific jobs. 1-2 pp., single-spaced, containing: your stated interest in the position advertised; a brief description of your dissertation and future research plans; brief descriptions of courses you have taught and can teach. **Include projected Dissertation defense date.**

3. Writing sample (20 – 25 pages) – a dissertation chapter or a publication that reflects your research strength(s)---and ideally shows why you are the perfect match for the position advertised."

4. Teaching portfolio: Include a 1-2 page single-spaced statement of teaching philosophy with brief description of courses you have taught and would like to teach; syllabi of both the foregoing; numeric and narrative student evaluations from the last few years.

5. Research Statement: 1-3 page (total) single spaced descriptions of future research projects after the dissertation over the next 5 years.

6. Official Transcripts

Some departments will request official transcripts.

7. Recommendations will be sent to Interfolio by your referees and you will select which ones are to be sent to a job. That is, different jobs may get different letters. These letters are confidential, but it is appropriate to ask people who know your strengths in specific areas. For example, you may have three letters that that you think will focus on research and one for your teaching. If you have a letter writer or two who has not played a central role in your research, it is appropriate to remind that person why you are asking for a reference and make sure she/he has your updated information in that regard, e.g., teaching.

Future reference file: Keep a file detailing the materials you have sent to each department, information about the department with which you will interview, and notes on the interview itself for future reference (e.g., follow up email or on-campus interview).

Interviews

Interviews are typically held at the Eastern APA, although you may interview for a position via phone or videoconferencing *before* and/or *after* the Eastern APA's annual meeting. Also, be prepared for interviews after December for adjunct or instructor/visiting positions. Interviews are typically **30- 60 minutes**. Be prepared to answer questions about current and future research, teaching, and academic service. Research the department(s) with which you will interview, so that you know something about the people on the interviewing committee. Remember that students on the committee will have hiring influence, so do not neglect their questions or interests.

Research

In most cases, you will talk about your dissertation when asked about current research. You should deliver a straightforward summary of your dissertation and it should invite further discussion about your research. Present your main thesis, arguments, and themes. The interviewing committee may

engage you philosophically or move on. Typically, the next topic is future research. You should be ready to give a description of your research projects for the next five years, e.g., a book based on your dissertation and/or articles that take your research further, and topics other than the dissertation subject that you intend to pursue.

Teaching

You should be prepared to describe courses that you have taught or would like to teach, but also courses that you would be expected to teach, given the area of AOS and AOC specified in the ad and the curriculum of the hiring department. Be prepared to talk about specific themes, authors, and specific texts. You may be asked to elaborate on your pedagogical commitments in your teaching statement and/or how you would address issues of diversity (in the classroom, as part of course design, or in reference to teaching 'canonical' texts).

Service

Speak about your service throughout your graduate career, including committees on which you have served, conferences that you have organized, editorial work that you may have done. You may also speak of ways in which you could contribute to the department and/or the community in the form of service, given shared interests and needs. Say that you look forward to being a good colleague and a good citizen of the institution.

Ask questions!

Show familiarity with and interest in the department by asking questions about student life and research and teaching opportunities.

FILL GAPS

Your **interviewers may know less** about the process than you do. If they do not ask you about research, teaching, and service, work that information into what they do ask you. They will need to know it to make the best hiring choice---you.

Attend the APA conference reception—the “smoker.” The reception is a good opportunity to follow up with members of the search committee after an interview. Your department faculty will be at the U of O table—drop by.

Consult your advisor about following up with a thank-you email.

Your Interview and On-campus Visit Wardrobe

Academic philosophy is a profession, with rituals. It is expected that job applicants will dress for interviews at the APA and on-campus, with a more formal presentation than graduate students, or even senior tenured faculty. Here is what is more or less required for job candidates: solid colors, i.e., black, grey, navy blue, beige, or else tweed, for jackets, suits, pants and skirts; an outfit consisting of a suit and dress shirt (tie preferred for men) or a jacket with pants or skirt that “go together.” Plan for three or four different outfits. Everything has to be clean and pressed, but none of it has to be new (thrift shops, discount stores, sales, and your friends are good sources) and you can mix and match.

Here is what should be avoided: a lot of facial hair, any extreme or 'wild' hair style, a lot of jewelry or makeup, strong scents, sneakers, jeans, boots (especially work boots, hiking boots, or snow boots--- dress boots are alright if not too ostentatious), bright colors, 'loud' patterns, erotically provocative clothing. Carry a book bag or brief case, instead of a back pack.

If all of this is too constraining, you can probably break one or two of the 'rules,' but not so many or in a way that draws immediate attention to you because of it (e.g., "the guy with the eyebrow rings and riding boots" or "the woman in the sleeveless dress with dragon tattoos").

STRESS

The job search process can be very demanding and taxing. In addition to the exciting positive stress of competition, challenge, having a new audience for your ideas, and overall adventure, some candidates may experience anxiety, self-doubt, or just not enjoy receiving intense attention. All of these reactions are normal when meeting new people, traveling cross country, meeting deadlines, and directly experiencing the inherent uncertainty of the situation. So: eat well, get enough sleep, exercise regularly, take time off for recreation, and make sure there are several people with whom you can "debrief" as you go through different phases of the job application and interview process. Your advisor and/or a member of the Placement Committee should commit to being available as your coach during the Eastern APA and on-campus interview phases, and any negotiation that you find necessary when you get a job offer. If you get more than one offer, your coach(s) will help you navigate that as well. *Make sure you have their cell phone numbers when you or they are out of town!*

SUMMARY/Job Market Time Line

Spring Assess whether you are ready to do a job search in the fall. Ideally, you should have a full draft of your dissertation or be near completion by September 1, OR the approval of your adviser based on what you have completed.

Summer Work on dissertation towards completion or near completion.

August -September

Prepare written materials for job applications.
Request student membership to APA in order to have online access to the JfP.
Establish an account with Interfolio: <http://www.interfolio.com/>
Make plans to attend the Annual Meeting of the Eastern APA, December 27-30:
Hotel reservations; plane tickets. Since it is a worthwhile convenience to stay at the conference hotel and the APA has special student rates, find out who you can share a room with. This can be 4 to a room and the APA will assign you if you can't find roommates among your peers in the Department.

September 1: Submit a draft of your dissertation or all completed chapters of dissertation

to letter writers. In some cases, letter writers will request your CV and additional material (such as dissertation abstract and/or the Introduction to your dissertation, your generic letter of intent).

October 1st: Letters of recommendation should be submitted to Interfolio.

October (1st or 2nd week)

JFP is published. (See JFP's publication schedule:
<http://www.apaonline.org/publications/schedules.aspx>)
Read ads carefully. Send materials requested in the ad, which may include **official transcripts**. If so, request transcripts from the registrar's office
http://registrar.uoregon.edu/former_students/transcript).

October 15: Full draft of the dossier ready to be tailored and polished, since deadlines for applications may be as early as late October.

November 1: Send off your applications. Note that this may continue for many months. The trend is for all parts of the application to be submitted electronically, but many employers still want paper and snail mail submissions, so be prepared for printing, postage, and organization of dossiers. Letters of recommendation must be sent by referees, preferably through Interfolio, but in some cases directly and individually for each job or postdoc by the person writing the letter, to the school.

November: Complete remaining materials such as descriptions of future research. Write out about a 4- 8 minute description of your dissertation. Prepare a short version first and then be ready to expand it given questions.

Send your applications in plenty of time before their due dates, however is most efficient for you. Some send them in batches, others individually as soon as they complete them for that school.

Early December: Mock Interview. Begin work on your job talk.

December 27-30: Interviews at Eastern APA.

January-February: Give practice job talk. Go to on- Campus visits.

February – April Job offers made

Please note that the hiring process for adjunct and instructor jobs goes on throughout the academic year and even during the summer. If you do not have a tenure- related or instructor position by April, expect your job search to continue in the months ahead and stay attuned for new ads and postings.

APPENDIX

The document which follows covers most of the same ground as the foregoing, from a slightly different perspective. Some of the differences between this document and the foregoing U of O Philosophy Placement Guide might be worth discussing among your peers, with your advisor and/or members of the U of O Philosophy Placement Committee.

Proceedings And Addresses February, 2005 (Volume 78, Issue 4)

APA Placement Brochure

This brochure offers some advice to those seeking jobs in philosophy. Like all advice it is to be taken with a grain of salt. It is based on the collective wisdom of the APA's Committee on Academic Careers and Placement in Fall 2004 (Larry May [chair], Andrew Light, Frank Ryan, Abby Wilkerson, Melissa Zinkin, Nancy Holland, Rebecca Copenhaver, Mark Timmons, David Tuncellito). Collective wisdom is probably somewhat less controversial than collective punishment, but more controversial than almost everything else. Nonetheless, we hope that some of what we recommend will prove helpful to some of you, some of the time. Job seeking is one of the most difficult things that people can engage in. Anything that reduces that difficulty has value.

1. When to Start Thinking about Jobs

It is never too early to start thinking about the job market. During your first years in graduate school you should be thinking about which papers your teachers have liked. After the end of term, take the paper back to the professor who liked it and ask two questions: What can I do to improve this paper and make it marketable for a conference or for publication? Which conference or journal would be best suited for a paper like mine?

You don't need to do a lot of this. One or two of your best essays, sent first to a conference and then to a journal, will do nicely. Only send out your very best work to conferences, for that is what you want to be remembered for.

In addition, in these early years in graduate school, you should try to put together a good assortment of courses that you have TAed for or taught independently. You should try to TA for all of the major introductory courses (introduction to philosophy, ethics, logic and critical thinking) as well as some specialized or advanced courses in your areas of specialization and competence. At some universities, such as the large state schools, the trick will be to limit your teaching so that you can get good writing done. At other schools, you may have to be creative to get enough teaching experience (try contacting

small colleges and community colleges in your area). Most importantly, keep your teaching evaluations from these courses. Or if course evaluations do not routinely have students evaluate TAs, design your own and administer it during the last week of classes (then have a departmental secretary collect and hold them for you until grades are turned in so students don't think you will retaliate against them).

A note of caution: Given the current and foreseeable demand for low-paid adjunct courses it can be very tempting to take on a large amount of adjunct teaching. Given the large number of graduate students seeking such teaching it can also be very tempting to take every course that is offered to you in order to ensure your place in the adjunct pool. The result sometimes can be a vicious cycle of taking more and more low-paid adjunct teaching that can impede your ability to finish your dissertation.

All other things being equal, and they hardly ever are, you could also use the early years in graduate school to get a bit (but only a bit) of service or administrative experience. The easiest here is to volunteer for a departmental committee, like the colloquium or admissions committee. If there are opportunities to work with an actual administrator, especially a Dean or higher, on a special project, you should jump at the opportunity since a letter from said administrator will make you look more attractive to administrators who will hire you down the road. Do not (repeat: do not) spend much time at this. Service is clearly a very distant third-place, after research and teaching, for the vast majority of jobs. No one gets hired on the basis of service, standing alone, unless you want to be hired into an administrative job. Remember too that one should be cautious about spending too much time on departmental or campus politics. Indeed, try to stay out of departmental politics altogether, which can come back to bite you. You are a transient in graduate school, and should not treat this as a permanent position.

It is a good idea to join the APA as soon as you can—the rates for student members are very low. And make sure to check the box on the application form saying that you would like to receive the publication called: *Jobs for Philosophers* (it's free—but you have to check the box to get it). Once you get this publication, you can scan through it and think to yourself: Do any of these jobs sound interesting to me? What do I need to do to stand the best chance of getting the job I like the most? Note whether there are any such jobs. If not, consider another career. If so, notice what combinations of things employers are looking for (for example, notice that most jobs in philosophy of science or mind also want someone who can teach logic; and most jobs in ethical theory or political philosophy also want someone who can teach applied ethics).

Another good source of experience and professional contacts can be found in the numerous smaller specialized societies organized around particular sub-fields of philosophy, affinity groups, or particular periods or figures, such as the Society for Women in Philosophy, the International Society for Environmental Ethics, or the Society for Realist/Antirealist Discussion. Such organizations can be invaluable for helping to establish you in the field and providing a set of interlocutors who can improve your work. One of the best ways to find such organizations is to survey the Group Meetings listings in

the program for each divisional APA conference.

In general, use the early years in graduate school to learn as much philosophy as you can. Also, begin to develop a specialty in philosophy, and perhaps also begin to develop a competence outside of philosophy, such as political science or computer science (although for certain jobs you might not want to highlight this). Use these early years to figure out if you really want to spend your life in a philosophy department, and to begin to get a sense of what it means to be a "professional" philosopher. While it is very romantic to want to be a philosopher, like being a poet one does not live by thoughts and words alone. The way to support yourself is by getting a job as a member of a profession, and our profession, as odd as it may sound, is teaching and publishing in philosophy, which is not especially romantic, but is better than many other jobs we know.

2. When to Go into the "Market"

One of the most important decisions you will make is when to go into the philosophy job market. This is especially important because many graduate students go in too early and waste years of their lives. The job market process is a nearly full-time job. So if you go in early and you don't have enough of your dissertation done, you can find yourself six months later with no job prospects and no more done on your dissertation than when you started. Do this a couple of years and you nearly place yourself out of the market by being too long in graduate school—taking too long to finish a dissertation is almost always seen as a bad sign of how long it will take you to finish anything else.

So, when is it optimal to go into the job market? While this varies a bit, the best time is when you are nearly done with your dissertation. "Nearly done" is a relative term. If you have a five-chapter dissertation, "nearly done" can mean four chapters drafted and approved by your committee, and the other chapter at least begun. Or it can mean, all five chapters drafted and some fairly minor revisions needed. At bare minimum, you need three of those five chapters done by early September. The main reason for this is that you need your dissertation committee chair to say, in a letter he or she will write in late September, "Yes, Jones will be done and ready to start undistracted in the Fall." But this is not enough, since everyone's committee chair will say that, or else your application process is simply a waste of time. In addition, the committee chair must offer evidence to back up this claim, such as, that all five chapters are drafted and only need minor revisions, or some such. Optimally, the letter from your committee chair will say: "We have set December 8th as the defense date." This is optimal because by the time you get to the Eastern Division meetings in late December, folks will know whether you are really done or not. January defense dates are good as well, because departments will be making hiring decisions by late January or early February, typically.

In normal years there are a lot more applicants for jobs in philosophy than there are jobs. So, employers are looking for reasons to throw out applications. The first cut at most schools is "whether the candidate is done, or will be done by September." Unless you can make a strong case for this, and your

dissertation committee chair can back you up, you are unlikely to make the first cut, and hence likely to have wasted six months or more. Don't delude yourself. It normally takes two months of relatively uninterrupted work to draft a good chapter, so it will take six months of very hard work to draft more than half of a dissertation, depending on your other commitments. If you haven't started seriously writing your dissertation by March, you don't stand much of a chance of being more than halfway done by September. But also don't wait too long. While the national average is seven years from BA to completion of the Ph.D., if after completing your coursework you take longer than three years to write the dissertation, potential employers will start to wonder whether this is a sign that you will not be able to write enough in your probationary period to be able to get tenure. So, our best advice is not to go into the market until you are done with the dissertation, or at very least "nearly done."

3. The System

In America in philosophy, the majority of jobs are advertised in Jobs for Philosophers in October and November and then first interviews (a half hour to an hour in length) are conducted at the APA Eastern Division meetings between Christmas and New Year's day. If you make it through the convention, then two or three people will be flown to campus for a two-day intensive interview, where you will meet all of the faculty members and present a professional paper, or teach a class, and increasingly both. There are also jobs advertised after New Year's day, although far fewer than before New Year's. These jobs will typically have their first interviews at the Pacific or Central Division meetings in late March or late April respectively. But many of these jobs will not be tenure track, but instead they are rather late announcements for temporary positions of one or more years. Some schools will do first interviews by phone, but these are still very rare. If you are seriously on the market, you should plan to go to the APA Eastern Division meetings and apply to jobs out of the October and November JFPs, and then keep applying throughout the year.

Many graduate students go to their first APA meeting when they go on the job market. While certainly understandable due to financial constraints, we strongly advise you to attend a meeting of the APA prior to going on the market. In particular, going to an Eastern APA meeting may help you avoid the "shell shock" of going to one of these meetings only when it "counts." We would also hope that attending these meetings without the pressure of being on the market will help you see the positive aspects of these conferences, especially the ability to reconnect with friends in the field and make new friends that you otherwise might not see in the academic year. Also, reading a paper or being a commentator might help get you a job in the following years.

4. The "Vita"

One of the main ways to tell whether you are ready to go on the market is whether you can put together a respectable vita by early September. A vita is simply an academic resume, but it is not really very simple at all. You should show your vita to various faculty members and put it through the kind of

drafting process that you would use for a term paper. For most applicants, the vita should be two to three pages long, with three to four pages for dissertation abstract and summary of teaching evaluations as supplements to the vita.

a) Address _ list your departmental and home addresses and phone numbers. Also list where you can be reached right up to the beginning of the Eastern APA convention (December 27).

b) Area of specialization _ this is optimally two or three areas of philosophy that you are especially qualified in. The dissertation is the primary, often only, basis for proof of a specialization. To figure out what would be good combinations of specialization, consult back issues of *Jobs for Philosophers* and then make sure that your dissertation really does cover those areas.

c) Area of competence _ this is optimally four or five areas of philosophy that you are ready to offer courses in, different from your specialized areas. The best way to demonstrate this is in terms of what you have taught or TAed.

d) Publications or conference presentations _ this could be one area of the vita or several, depending on what you have accomplished. Do not pad your vita with very minor things (or optimally, list them under a separate category for minor publications). Try to list the most significant first—they don't need to be in chronological order. Make sure to indicate whether something was peer refereed.

e) Teaching experience _ list TA experience in a separate category from autonomous teaching. List the dates and places of the experience.

f) Special honors and awards _ list whatever seems relevant to a job search in philosophy. Mainly focus on things you earned in graduate school.

g) Recommendation writers _ list the names of all of those who will write letters for you and the addresses and phone numbers for them. This list should include all three (or four) members of your primary dissertation committee, as well as someone who will write specifically about your teaching—preferably someone who has good first-hand experience of it. And it is sometimes an especially good thing to be able to have someone write for you who is not a faculty member at your department or school. Those letters are more believable since the reputation of the recommendation writer is not tied up with whether you get a job or not. For example, if you give a conference paper and have a commentator who liked the paper, ask that person to write a letter for you; act similarly for a paper you have written about a prominent philosopher who has read your work and appreciated it, but such letters are limited in scope. It often is a good idea to give to prospective letter writers a letter from you that indicates what things optimally you'd like them to cover in the recommendation, and give them lots

of time—ask them by Sept. 1.

h) List of graduate courses taken: list all courses (including those you audited) along with the name of the professor and the semester taken. It is often a good idea to group these by subject areas rather than merely to present them chronologically. DO NOT LIST GRADES—no one cares anymore.

i) Summary of selected course evaluations: on no more than two sheets of paper, list five or six sets of teaching evaluations, displayed in graphic form that is easy to read

j) Dissertation abstract—on one or two sheets of paper give a detailed description of the arguments of the dissertation. Provide a summary paragraph and long paragraphs on each chapter. [NOTE: if you can't easily provide this abstract then you are definitely not ready to go on the market.]

It is hard to stress enough how important it is to get the vita just right. The trick is not to pad the vita and yet to list all of the important stuff about your fledgling professional life.

On a more mundane subject, normal white paper and average size typeface work best. This is why you need lots of feedback and redraftings to get it right. If you have any questions about how you "appear" through the vita, ask people you can trust to give you frank advice, and then, with several such pieces of advice, make a decision about how you want to "appear."

Do not waste your time applying for jobs that list an AOS different from the ones you list on the vita.

5. The Cover Letter

The cover letter for each job application should basically be a one-page attempt to demonstrate that you fit the job description. This means that you should highlight aspects of the vita that demonstrate your qualifications for the things mentioned in the job ad. You should have a paragraph on teaching and a paragraph on research, at bare minimum.

The cover letter is sometimes the only thing that members of a hiring committee read, so take your time with it and try to convey as much information as you can in a page or so without being excessively wordy or using terms and expressions that may be esoteric to a particular sub-field of philosophy—keep in mind that most people reading this letter will not be working in the specialty area in which you work. It is not a problem to go over one page in length, but remember that folks may not read the second page.

If at all possible, put the cover letter on departmental stationery. If you already have a job, this is easy. But if you are still in graduate school, most departments will let you use departmental stationery. If your department secretary complains about the cost of letterhead stock, merely ask for one sheet, and then

photocopy it and print your covering letter on the photocopied departmental letterhead.

6. The Writing Sample

You will need to supply at least one writing sample with each application. It is commonly thought that the writing sample should come from the dissertation. If it does not, people may wonder whether the dissertation is indeed almost done. You should take a chapter from the dissertation and make it a free-standing 25-page paper. If you have a paper that has been accepted for publication, you should include this as well; but especially if it is not from the dissertation, this should be included in addition to, not instead of, the dissertation chapter.

In all cases, the writing sample should be your very best work. After all, someone may actually read it and base the whole interview on it. How embarrassing it will be for you if you really don't think that thesis is defensible anymore. Writing samples should be very carefully edited for typos and infelicities of style, since this is the only piece of your work members of a hiring committee are likely to see. You should never send out a writing sample that has not been seen, and critiqued, by several people in your field, even if these are only fellow graduate students. Do not assume that even if people have seen earlier drafts of the writing sample, say when it was merely a chapter, that is good enough. As with everything else you send out for the purposes of getting a job, only send things out that others have looked at for you in advance. [Note: Your writing sample should not be the same as the professional paper you deliver on campus, lest folks think that you only have one good idea.]

7. Which Schools to Apply to

Our standard advice is that if you are serious about the job market you should be able to apply to 30-80 jobs before Christmas. Of course, it is a waste of everyone's time to apply to jobs that you are not qualified for, or for which you do not have the right AOS. But so many jobs list open specializations, or merely list courses to be taught, that it shouldn't be hard to find quite a number of jobs that one is qualified for out of the 300-plus advertised in the October and November issues of *Jobs for Philosophers*.

Many students decide to do a more limited search. In order to accomplish this goal they try to determine which departments are most likely to hire them, and then only apply to those schools. For instance, if someone really wants to teach applied ethics, then one often applies only to jobs that list applied ethics as an AOS, rather than also to jobs that list ethical theory or political philosophy as specializations. In deciding whether to pursue this strategy, you should realize that departments often change their minds about precisely what they want. If you do a limited search, still apply to as many jobs as you can from those that you are qualified for. Remember that you don't have to take every job that is offered, but unless you get an offer from somewhere you won't get a job at all.

8. Preparing for the Interview

Before going to the APA Eastern convention for the first round of job interviews, everyone should first have a mock interview. If this is not a regular feature of your graduate program, mock interviews are easy to organize on your own. Merely find two or three faculty members, give them a copy of your vita a few minutes in advance (to make it seem like the real thing) and have them sit in a room with you for an hour and role-play.

The first half of the interview should be about research, and it should begin with someone asking you to describe your dissertation in about ten minutes. The "Spiel" should be memorized and well-rehearsed in front of a mirror. Of course, you will rarely get through ten minutes before questions start flying. And that's good—since the whole point of an interview is to have a conversation where three things are learned: how good a philosopher you are, what kind of a teacher you are likely to be, and whether you will be a good conversationalist as a colleague. Since you won't normally be allowed to finish the "Spiel" front-load it with the most interesting ideas.

The second half of the mock interview, like most of the real interviews you will face, should be focused on teaching. You should come prepared to discuss in detail how you would teach courses that would naturally fall out of your areas of specialization and competence. Be prepared to explain what you think students should get out of a given course in order to motivate your teaching approach. Prepare elaborately for these mock interviews, as well as for the real one, and bring sample syllabi for a host of courses you are likely to be asked to teach.

At the mock interview, those mocking you should put on different hats, preferably trying to simulate folks who will indeed interview you. For that reason, wait to do this until early to middle December so it is likely that you will have started to hear from schools. Also, ask the mockers to be brutally frank with you. A lot of what goes wrong in interviews is easy to fix if you know about it in advance. It is easy to redo your "Spiel." And, if you bite your thumb or scratch your rear end, this can easily be corrected once you know it. If you look distracted, you can sit up straight and then lean forward. If you look too intense or nervous, you can slide down in the chair and slump a little. If you look too buttoned-up, unbutton; if you look too laid-back, button-up, etc.

When you get interviews, go onto the departmental web site and look at the courses that would naturally fall into your specialization and competence. It is also a good idea to try to get a sense of what type of school it is. And if this is a "plum" job for you, you might want to read some things that people in the department, especially those in your area, have written.

At nearly every real interview, you will be asked if you have any questions for them, so make that part of the mock interview as well. If you don't know this you can be flummoxed by this question—so have one

or two questions, ideally based on your knowledge of the department and the curriculum, e.g.: "Are your 400 level courses only upper level undergraduate courses or are there both graduate students and undergraduate students in these courses?" Don't be too provocative here and generally stay away from salary issues.

Very often you will be asked what your "next" project will be, now that you are nearing the end of your dissertation—you don't have to have a super-detailed answer to this, but you should have some answer. Don't try to make something up on the spur of the moment. A good strategy is to work up a project that spins off the dissertation, perhaps writing the chapter you never got to, or that is a natural follow-up to the dissertation. That way you can still talk about stuff you know something about.

9. What to Wear

The best advice about what to wear is to wear what will make you comfortable. Men don't need to wear a suit, nor do women. Jackets are pretty much required though. Don't wear a loud tie or a loud scarf. You don't want to be remembered later as that person with the weird thing on—much better to be remembered for what you said—the person who had a really interesting response to Smith's hard question, for instance. Ties for men are not strictly required; but more men wear them than not, so... Women, as is true for men, can certainly wear pants, as long as they look professional, and indeed you might prefer them. In general, dress comfortably _ the placement process will be uncomfortable enough as it is.

10. General Convention Advice

If you can afford it, plan to spend two or three nights at the hotel where the convention occurs. And best not to have a roommate, unless it is someone you really trust. Things will be stressful enough without having anywhere to escape to (and watch cartoons, or the weather channel, or whatever relaxes you) between interviews. Also, for two of the evenings there will be receptions (still called "smokers" by most attendees, even though there hasn't been any smoke or fire for many years) in the evening, often going on till late hours, and it is best not to have to navigate mass transit after midnight.

Generally, drink little if any alcohol during the convention. And try to stay away from folks who have been drinking and have interviewed you. Aside from this advice, though, there is nothing wrong with trying to find folks who interviewed you later in the day at the "smokers." Many a job has been secured with an extra effort at finding and conversing with folks where you effectively get a second interview to only one for your competitors. Of course, don't make a pest out of yourself. Look sheepish as you approach them, and ask if it is OK to continue the conversation that was begun earlier. Many departments make finding them at the smoker easy by reserving a table in the large hall where these events occur. When you enter the hall the APA will provide a list of the numbered tables that have been reserved by various departments. When departments have reserved a table they are signaling in part

that they are encouraging candidates to stop by for a chat after the interview, so you should plan on coming by.

11. Apres Convention

After the convention go back home and prepare a campus job talk. Better yet, you should have had such a talk already planned out in October. In any event, you should not delay doing this since you might get a call only a few days after the meetings asking you to fly out for a campus visit. Almost everyone wants either a formal or informal paper, and you should get one ready right away just in case. It is also a good idea to go over the convention with your placement director or mentor and see if follow-up e-mails might be warranted. Also try to set up a mock job talk—round up your friends and stray faculty members and make them sit down for an hour with you while you do a dress rehearsal.

If you get a job offer and still haven't heard from a school you prefer, call them up. Nothing is lost here. If they don't want you, and they have any manners at all, then they'll let you down gently. But the worst thing is if they do want you but are merely being slow and you don't give them enough notice about a deadline for another job.

12. Late Breaking Jobs and Persistence

Keep yourself open to the possibility that nothing will happen as a result of the first round of job interviews. Keep sending out applications until you are sure you'll be employed. This is psychologically hard to do, but it is necessary. Many of our students have gotten jobs in the second or third round, after the competition has diminished a bit. Those jobs are no less desirable, often, than those that interview at the Eastern. And always remember, you don't have to stay in the same position forever.

As was briefly mentioned above, some jobs that are advertised in the Fall, and comparatively more advertised in the Spring, are not tenure-track but limited term appointments for a year or more. These jobs can be important stepping-stones to a good tenure-track job. While many if not most of these limited term positions are for sabbatical replacements and so not renewable, some can become gateways for permanent positions at the same institution. In addition, having letters of reference from members of a department who have gotten to know you as a colleague, rather than as a grad student, can be very valuable in helping you to land a tenure-track job.

It is also increasingly common for departments to advertise full time postdoctoral fellowships of one to three years. You might even consider looking for and taking one of these positions rather than initially seeking a tenure-track job. Most postdocs do not teach full loads and will allow you to build a strong record of publications. Helpful hint: Many postdoctoral positions are not advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers* when they are part of a college or university's on-going "society of fellows" program or part of an established research center. Those interested in such positions should consult the job listings in

the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and individual university web-sites.

13. Problems

If problems (of harassment, intimidation, or general annoyance) occur, talk to the APA staff or to the ombudsperson for the meetings, normally a friendly member of the very APA committee that wrote this brochure, and hence someone who cares about you. It is simply unacceptable for any job candidate to be made to feel uncomfortable because of comments about physical appearance, and certainly about sex or race. There is no reason not to complain, and the members of our committee who attend every APA meeting will not treat such complaints lightly.

If you are disabled, your right to full access in every aspect of the placement process ought to be extended without question or repercussion, just as you should be able freely to disclose your disability status. The APA is now beginning to address these problems, as are many institutions. In the meantime, candidates must not hesitate to request necessary accommodations, yet still have to strategize about disclosure or access requests. At the campus visit stage, wheelchair-accessible spaces cannot be assumed, yet are probably one of the simpler accommodations for most institutions, which may not be prepared to provide interpreter services or assume the travel costs of assistants. Candidates should carefully think through how they will negotiate these issues. Currently, the APA will provide a quiet interview room for candidates or interviewers for whom the large common interviewing area is inaccessible for reasons of disability such as, but not limited to, deafness, hearing impairment, cognitive impairments, or speech impairments. Contact the placement service if you need this provision. Additional concerns related to access or ableist bias in the placement process may be taken up with the placement ombudsperson through the APA placement service.

Copyright 2003, The American Philosophical Association.
Last revised: February 23, 2005