

TIPS FOR THE ACADEMIC JOB INTERVIEW

Useful questions for individual meetings/meals

1. What is the standing/status of the department/group within the school?
2. What are the relationships between your group and other groups of interest (sociology, psychology, economics, etc)?
3. What is it like to teach here? Are the students engaged, challenging, aggressive, etc.?
4. How are teaching assignments negotiated? Do most faculty teach all year long or just one semester?
5. What is the research environment like? Do people collaborate, give feedback to each other, never speak to each other, etc...?
6. What are the journals that this department views as A-list?
7. What is the tenure and review process like? When do I get reviewed, are the reviews internal or external? When do I get feedback on my progress?
8. What are you looking for in an assistant professor?
9. What are the qualities that an assistant professor has to be successful here?
10. What types of people generally aren't successful here?
11. Ask about whether the school has the resources you will need (equipment, research money, etc).
12. Tell me about how you got here...(people love to talk about themselves)
13. (For faculty that have been at the school a long time) How has the school/department changed over the years, and where do you see it going in the future?
14. (For new faculty) What is it like to be a newcomer to this school? What is it like to be an assistant professor here?
15. (Before your talk) What is the audience like for the seminar? Is someone always aggressive, asleep, etc? Who is going to be most/least familiar with my type of research?
16. What is it like to live in this city? How is the commute, cost of living, etc.?

Questions you should be prepared to answer

1. Tell me about your own research (start with your elevator pitch and then see what follow-up questions they have).
2. Where else are you interviewing?
3. What other offers do you have?
4. What do you want to teach?
5. What are you looking for in a school?
6. Why are you interested in our school?
7. Where do you see your research in the next 5/15/30 years?

Things to bring with you to the interview

1. Bottled water
2. Mints
3. Backup of everything for your talk: Laptop, floppy and cd with talk, transparencies
4. Powerbar (or something for a quick meal)
5. Wardrobe malfunction equipment (sewing kit, lint roller, extra pantyhose – if applicable)

Other things to pack on your trip

1. 1-2 business suits (depending on how many days you're interviewing)
2. 1-2 outfits for dinners (dinners are generally business casual)
3. Something to wear in the hotel

Standard components of a job offer

1. Salary
2. Summer support
 - a. level of summer support (ninth)
 - b. guaranteed for how many years
3. Teaching load
 - a. what classes, how many sections, what semesters these courses will be taught
 - b. # preps pre-tenure
 - c. undergrads vs. graduate students
 - d. is there a teaching load reduction for first-year assistant professors?
 - e. can you buy out teaching with grant money?
4. Research budget
 - a. what do you have to pay for out of this? Assistant, phone, computer, copies, conferences, journals, etc?
5. Relocation budget
 - a. what does this cover (e.g., house-hunting trips)?
 - b. can any money not spent out of this budget be rolled into your research budget?
6. Recruiting visit
 - a. will the school pay for you and your family to come visit the school and the area again before you accept?

Tips for negotiating your offer

1. Negotiation is a common part of the process – deans and department heads know that this is part of their job
2. Do your homework - research your “market value.” Find out what other schools are paying for a rookie in your department. Talk to your faculty, former PhD students from your department to get a sense of what an “average” offer is. KFBS pays for this market data – Can get it from your faculty or dean's office.
3. You have the most power after you get the offer, but before you accept. Don't think that you'll ask for something once you get there – you've lost most of your leverage once you have accepted your offer.
4. It never hurts to ask! You may be told no, but as long as you frame your question in the right way (see point #5), there shouldn't be any negative consequences.
5. Whenever possible, try to frame requests in terms of what will make you most productive as a faculty member (e.g., I feel that I will be most productive with my research if I can...consolidate my teaching in one semester, teach only one prep for the first 2 years, get specialized lab equipment to support my research, etc.)
6. Bring up dual career/family issues as soon as possible if you want help with them (but probably not before you get the offer).