

"What to keep in mind if you want an academic position."

A possibly rambling series of tips ☺

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Hopefully you aren't graduating this summer -- it's probably too late for most of these ideas!

Recurring themes:

- Be prepared
- Communication skills

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As a graduate student

- Polish your English -- make it impeccable (both spoken and written)
 - Communicate only in English (except, say, with family)
 - Ask native-English-speaking friends and professors to review your writing and talks ahead of time
- Go to conferences, meet people
- Publish papers, give talks -- be seen
- Write one or more funding proposals with your advisor

As a graduate student 2

- Get teaching experience -- teach!
 - Be more than a TA -- be an instructor here, or for a nearby school for an undergraduate course.
 - Get feedback on your teaching and improve
 - Do it again
- Interact with more than your advisor
 - You'll need the contacts and references later
 - You want feedback to improve



As a graduate student 3

- Other suggestions
 - Get a credit card
 - Useful especially when traveling
 - Consider getting a laptop
 - Not required, but often helpful as existing computers often work or don't work in unexpected ways



Ready to graduate with PhD

- Prepare research and teaching statements
 - What do you want to do with your life? Why? How will you do it?
 - What do you want to teach?
 - What do you want to study (i.e., do research)?
 - How will you raise funding for your research?
 - Make the English perfect
 - Get feedback



Ready to graduate 2

- Select references
 - Your advisor, hopefully will be able to write a long, glowing letter
 - You want a few others who can also speak very positively
 - You may need teaching references too
- Prepare your CV
 - Have multiple people review it and give you feedback



Ready to graduate 3

- Apply for a job!
 - Apply to many schools if appropriate area
 - Apply to schools better and worse than Lehigh
 - The better schools at least have to see your name, and you might get lucky and invite you for an interview
 - The worse schools are more likely to interview and hire you
 - Ask advisor about school reputations
 - Phone interviews count!
 - The hiring chair is likely to call you to set up the interview and introduce you to the process -- his/her impression of you is important!

Ready to graduate 4

- Schedule interviews
 - Be willing to interview early (Jan-Feb)
 - May need to plan for 2-3 interviews per week
 - Accept as many interview requests as you can but limit to around a dozen
 - Expect to get nothing else done during interview weeks
 - If you are serious, take your spouse!



Ready to graduate 5

- Prepare a job talk
 - Make multiple versions
 - shorter, longer (typical is about 45 minutes)
 - Create an undergraduate teaching talk
 - some schools require it (e.g., Lehigh)
 - Practice, practice, get feedback, revise and improve
 - Make the English perfect (spelling, grammar, word choice, etc.)
 - Show depth of research relatively briefly
 - Most faculty will not be in your area

Job Interviews

- *Time to learn whether you are right for them, and whether they are right for you*
- Be friendly, smile
- Try to learn names -- take notes!
- Talk about what you can do for the dept
 - What you might teach (hopefully what they need)
 - People with whom you might collaborate
- Do your homework -- review the dept. web site, & faculty personal home pages

Job Interviews 2

- Prepare questions about faculty work in advance in case of slow points in the conversation
- Think ahead about research interests that are unrelated to your thesis
- Get lots of sleep -- interviews can be fun, but they are long and grueling
- Even if you decide right away that this is not the place for you, make a good effort
 - They might be the only offer you get!
 - Word of a bad interview might travel to places in which you are interested
 - You may wish to work with these people in the future

Job Interviews 3

- Ask about non-academic issues (commuting, housing prices)
 - Consider this to be a lifetime move!
- Be prepared to answer questions about
 - what you want in an offer
 - why you are interviewing at this school
 - where else you are interviewing
 - the 2/5/15 minute version of your research
 - ...lots more...



Job Talk

- Practice, practice, practice in advance
- When given a question, slow down and make sure you understand it
 - Try to answer, but be willing to admit that you don't know the answer
- Make sure you can speak loudly enough to be heard in the back of a lecture hall
- Show your excitement for your work!



Job Offers

- Think in advance about what you want in an offer
 - Certain salary
 - Summer support
 - Graduate student support
 - Funds for a lab and equipment
 - Space for a lab/grad student offices
 - Others?

Job Offers 2

- Think ahead about which places you might accept an immediate offer
- Juggling offers can be difficult
 - Deadline for responses may be before your interviewing is complete
 - Can often negotiate some aspects, but usually a slow & difficult process
 - Many people involved in the formal offer

Show the world

- That you are mature, energetic, and much more than competent.
- That Lehigh is a *great* school.
- That you are the ideal faculty candidate.
- Good luck!

