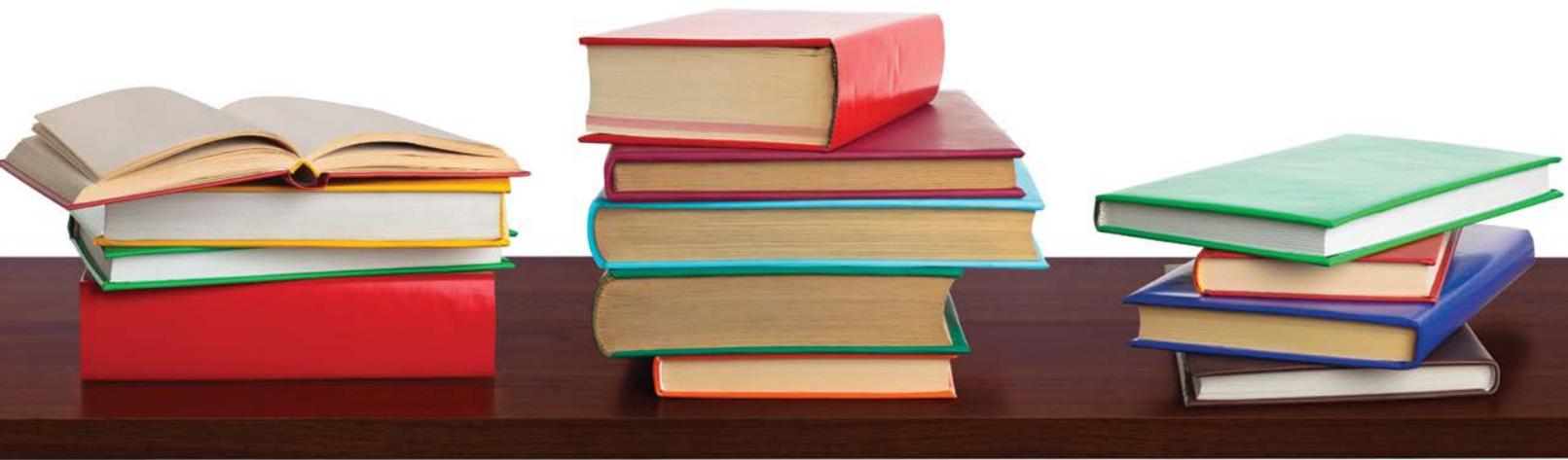


Career Planning Guide

**THE
GRADUATE
CENTER**
CITY UNIVERSITY
OF NEW YORK



Office of Career Planning and Professional Development

The Graduate Center

The City University of New York

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Dear Graduate Students and Alumni,

You hold in your hand or see on your screen the first edition of the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development's Career Planning Guide. It provides answers to some of the most common questions asked in our office: How do I figure out what to do with my degree? What should a CV look like? What can I expect in an interview? This guide is meant to be a conversation starter, not an end point, one that gives you enough knowledge to know what to do next and where to seek more help.

The Office of Career Planning and Professional Development sits within a network of career resources at the Graduate Center. Your faculty members are also terrific sources of advice, perspective, and career support. Our office works with colleagues across the GC to provide you with assistance. Other offices you should be aware of include:

- Teaching & Learning Center*
- GC Library*
- GC Digital Initiatives*
- Futures Initiative*
- Office of Research and Sponsored Programs*
- Early Research Initiative*
- Interactive Technology and Pedagogy Certificate program*
- New Media Lab*

All of these programs offer workshops and other forms of support to graduate students. You should take advantage of them. You should also be aware of the engaging work that happens at the GC's many centers and institutes. Take time to participate in the life of your program and the institution.

Sometimes people ask our office about the best ways to succeed in graduate school and beyond. The key is starting your professional development early and working on a few basics:

- Use every opportunity to share your research with colleagues and faculty. Submit proposals to present at conferences and work toward publishing your research.*
- Take advantage of GC resources that can help you with your teaching and learn to do it well.*
- Apply for external funding for your work. You'll learn from the process even if you don't receive an award.*
- Master the digital tools you need to be successful in your field.*
- Learn to talk to a wide range of audiences about your research and teaching.*
- Become familiar with the workings of the job markets in fields of interest to you.*
- Begin to craft your online presence by setting up your own website and engaging others on networking platforms.*
- Keep your CV and resume updated and ready to send out on short notice.*
- Build a strong professional network.*

We are happy to see you in our office at any time during your graduate career. All of the information about how to find us is on our website: cuny.is/careerplan. We look forward to meeting you.

Jennifer Furlong, Director

Annabella Bernard, Administrative Coordinator

Emily Seamone and Julie Vick, Career Advisers

Erin Garrow, Joseph Hill, Jared Keel, Meira Levinson, Abbie Turner, and Anders Wallace, Student Fellows

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SELF-ASSESSMENT AND YOUR CAREER DIRECTION

Career Prospects

Part of earning a graduate degree is contemplating the next steps in your career as well as your longer-term employment path. Where are you headed? Where do you want to go? You may have an exact idea of what you would like to do, have a few notions, or generally feel confused about your prospects. Even if you have a specific plan in mind, upon further investigation you may discover that your targeted career is not ideal for you or offers few job opportunities. Indeed, one of the most common questions students raise in the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development is “What can or should I do with my degree? What other paths can I take?”

When attempting to answer these types of questions, keep in mind that career uncertainty is something that many graduate students experience along the way. You are not alone. Even when you embark on a particular career path, you will make adjustments and change course along the way. This is a normal part of managing a career in today’s working world. While we wish there was a magical answer for each student faced with this conundrum, figuring out your next steps will take some time and reflection.

Self-reflection as it relates to career development is often referred to as the “career self-assessment process.” It is an opportunity to contemplate and gain insight into your fit with today’s world of work. Begin this introspective process by reviewing the professional experiences you have had to date. What have you learned from these opportunities? Even if you have not engaged in many traditional employment arrangements, you have had opportunities to apply various skills throughout your undergraduate and graduate school education and even volunteer work. These experiences provide valuable data as well.

The essence of the career self-assessment process involves completing exercises that garner valuable insight into your unique goals and preferences, and how they fit various career paths. These exercises can be informal, such as listing jobs that you’d enjoy, or can involve standardized career assessment tools that incorporate specific career development theories and have been rigorously tested and researched, such as the Strong Interest Inventory and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). These tools, whether formal or informal, will yield important data about yourself, such as revealing career patterns and themes that will assist in making informed decisions about next steps.

Values, Skills, Interests, and Personality Traits

Often the most beneficial tools and exercises for career assessment focus on one or more of four main aspects that lead to career satisfaction: our values, skills, interests, and personality traits. By focusing on these four areas, we are able to capture a more complete picture of who we are in the work world and our own personal “career satisfaction formula.” If we fixate on only one of these elements, such as our interests, we may miss other crucial evidence.

When participating in the self-assessment process, note that the data you gain may point you in the direction of several career fields. The next step typically involves condensing the list by conducting research on each option. It is difficult, if not impossible, for any one person to be aware of the myriad career paths that exist within one area or specialty, unless s/he already is employed in that field. Often it takes time to research a field, gather more information, converse with professionals engaged in the industry, and even work in the area to really get to know the various paths. But by taking time to assess yourself and conduct research, you have more knowledge and information to help you make an educated decision.

Career advisers in our office are available to meet with students and alumni to discuss the career assessment tools we offer and determine if these would be helpful. Our office currently uses the following formal career assessments: The Strong Interest Inventory, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), SkillScan, and Strengths Finder.

If you decide to move forward with the career self-assessment process, we then arrange for you to complete the instruments and schedule additional appointments for reviewing the results and discussing patterns and interpretations.

Even if you feel you have a strong sense of the path you would like to follow in your career, we encourage you to review the exercises and questions below to learn more about yourself and your fit within the world of work. Another benefit of this self-reflection is gaining an improved understanding of your strengths and skills, which will assist you in the process of preparing a resume, CV, cover letter, online profiles, elevator pitches, and other branding statements. Furthermore, it will help with preparation for interviews.

Career Values:

- Values are aspects of life that are most important or worthy to us. Throughout our childhood, we observe and assess a variety of values that are demonstrated by our caregivers, other adults in our life, society, and the media. Eventually we formulate our own unique set, which can change and shift throughout our lives, especially as we evolve through different phases and transitions. Values are critical to our career satisfaction; if we are engaged in work that does not fit with our values, we will most likely be dissatisfied with our job.
- Take a moment to think about what is really important to you and your career. What do you want it to embody? Don't worry about socially acceptable answers; be honest with yourself. Below are some common career values, but feel free to add any others as well.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job security | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast paced environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High salary/good benefits | <input type="checkbox"/> Competition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendships/good working relationships | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advancement tracks | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect and being valued |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standard 40-hour work week or 9-5 schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure and excitement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Status and prestige | <input type="checkbox"/> Colleagues with diverse backgrounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration and team work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work mostly alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed work environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of tasks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help others | <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate leisure time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gain knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Influence others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help society | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work-life balance | <input type="checkbox"/> Routine and predictability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work mostly with people | <input type="checkbox"/> Structured environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autonomy and independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Glamour or level of social status |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging work | <input type="checkbox"/> Tranquility and low pressure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual status and expertise | <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with public |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Making decisions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible work schedule | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clear expectations | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accomplishments | _____ |

- Once you have a complete list, rank your values to create a top 10 list and arrange them in order of importance. What is the number one value that you will not forgo no matter what? Be sure to define this value; if it is "work-life balance," for example, what exactly does that mean to you? What does it look like?
- Which values are you willing to sacrifice in your top 10 list if you cannot meet them all in your next job opportunity?

Interests:

- Our unique interests can also fluctuate throughout our lives; what we identify as interesting today may vastly differ from our main focus five years ago. Current and long-standing interests are more obvious indicators of what we might enjoy at work.
- Carry a notebook for a week or create a list in your phone of anything you find interesting. This might include a specific article you read, a piece of art, a thought you had, a movie you watched. Write down everything and anything, as long as you are drawn to it.
- Think about the projects, tasks, and courses you have found to be most interesting during your educational, volunteer, and work experiences. Add those as well.
- When you are finished capturing all your interests, group them into categories in a way that is comprehensible to you. Do any patterns emerge?

Skills:

- We are constantly enhancing our established skills and gaining new skills through our personal and professional lives. However, excelling in a particular area does not necessarily mean we enjoy using that skill. It is important to focus on your “motivated skills” (i.e., those skills that energize you) when considering possible career paths. You want to ensure that the majority of your time in a job will be spent engaging with your motivated skills. Keep in mind that there may also be skills you enjoy using but have not fully developed yet. You want to consider these as well.
- Review your most recent resume or CV and consider all the different jobs and/or academic experiences you have had. For each listing, record the skills you employed to complete that job or experience. Be sure to “unpack” each skill as well. For instance, if you taught a class and wrote down “teach” as a skill, challenge yourself to dissect this ability even further. What did you have to do in order to teach? Some skills underlying “teach” might include: prepare, plan, organize, manage the class, interact with various individuals, synthesize material, present, think on your feet, and so on.
- Also recall the feedback you’ve received from each job or educational experience, even reflecting on comments from performance reviews and evaluations. What have you been told you excel at? Where are your strong suits?
- To help you get started, below are common transferable skills that graduate students tend to develop throughout their academic careers. (These are adapted from *Outside the Ivory Tower*, by Margaret Newhouse. Published in 1993, it was the first book-length guide for PhDs looking for non-faculty careers.)

Administer	Coordinate
Advise	Counsel or coach
Analyze and classify	Create
Anticipate	Deal with pressure
Apply administrative skills	Deal with unknowns
Audit/accounting	Decision making
Calculate and manage risk	Delegate
Coach or mentor	Design
Collaborate/teamwork	Develop mathematical & statistical models
Collate/keep records	Edit or revise
Communicate via social media	Employ technical skills
Conceptualize	Endure or persist
Construct	Evaluate or appraise

THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS: OVERVIEWS AND TIMELINES

GENERAL JOB SEARCH PROCESS AND TIMELINE

To find a job, you begin by looking for information about open positions. A job opening is usually posted for the following reasons: a current employee or faculty member leaves a position at a given organization or institution; a company is granted permission to add a new role to a team or department; or an academic department is given permission to add a new line (e.g., a tenure-track faculty member). For faculty positions in many disciplines, jobs are posted and hires are made in a similar cycle each year. The specifics of this type of job search are detailed in the following section (“Faculty Job Search Process and Timeline”). Most organizations, however, do not have a set recruiting cycle. Hiring in the non-academic world is often on an “as-needed” or “just in time” basis. It is important to keep this in mind if you are planning on applying for a range of job types during your search.

Application Process (General Overview for Non-Faculty Positions)

For many types of opportunities, potential candidates apply via an online application system through the organization’s website. When the application period ends, a human resources staff member filters the applicant pool through the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) based on keywords that match the position’s requirements. Applicants often become concerned about determining the right keywords for their application materials to increase the odds of passing the ATS screening. Although it is always good practice to include keywords from your field in your resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile, it can be difficult to discern the exact words for each posting. Thus, we encourage students and alumni to conduct research on keywords for their field in general, as well as review each job description closely.

On the other hand, in some cases there is not an ATS involved, but instead the hiring manager, recruiter, or other designated team member will review applications manually, quickly scanning each one for certain skills and experiences.

The final set of candidates that meet the criteria set via the ATS or a designated person is then given on to the hiring manager. The hiring manager, and perhaps other staff members on his/her team, sort through the final batch of applications more closely. However, by this point the hiring manager may already have a few names of potential candidates in mind. S/he may have an internal applicant, perhaps a top performer on his/her team, or know of a strong candidate through a connection. Other company employees may have also passed on recommendations to the hiring manager of individuals they know from their professional networks. Although the hiring manager is not going to guarantee any of these referrals an interview, s/he may pay the most attention to these applications.

Hiring Managers, Recruiters, and Headhunters

The supervisor of the open position will typically be designated as the hiring manager for the role. This individual, who has the most knowledge about the position and strongest influence in the selection of candidates, will likely manage all aspects of the recruiting and hiring process. Although the exact steps may vary greatly from organization to organization, the hiring manager may create the job description, determine where the job listing will be posted, plan the interview process, select applicants to be interviewed, and interview candidates. This person will most likely make the final decisions on which applicant is the best fit for the role, usually along with the input of others and approval from his/her boss. Finally, the hiring manager will contact the chosen candidate to extend an offer and manage negotiations.

In some instances recruiters and headhunters may participate in the hiring process. Although the terms “recruiter” and “headhunter” are often used interchangeably, recruiters are typically individuals who are employed by a company to source suitable candidates and assist with the recruiting and hiring process. Depending on the field, company, and type of role, a hiring manager may ask a recruiter in his/her company for assistance with an open position. For example, the recruiter may post the position online, review the applications as a first screening, and participate in the interview process. The involvement of a recruiter is more common in larger, for-profit companies that have human resources departments. Recruiters are typically the

organizational representatives who visit college campuses and attend career fairs. They can also be found on LinkedIn, perhaps tied to the organization's company page.

Many times applicants get confused when in contact with a recruiter, as it can seem that a recruiter will help them get the job. However, because the recruiter is an employee of the company, s/he is more concerned about the ideal candidate for the role and organization, not the ideal role for the applicant.

Headhunters, on the other hand, are individuals who work as a consultant or independent contractor to source candidates for an organization's open positions. Some hiring managers have long-standing relationships with headhunters that they know well and trust. Thus the hiring manager will seek the assistance of these specific individuals for hard-to-fill roles, such as those requiring specialized knowledge or a certain level of experience or expertise. In these cases, the hiring manager needs the additional help of a headhunter, who often specializes in particular career fields and thus can tap into extensive networks to source suitable candidates. The company usually compensates the headhunter on a contingency basis, meaning if s/he successfully fills a role, the headhunter will be paid a fee (often a percentage of the position's annual salary). Because the company is paying the headhunter, the applicant or candidate does not need to pay for a recruiter or headhunter's services.

The best way to find reputable external headhunters is by word of mouth. You might ask others you know in the field if they work with any headhunters. In some industries and for some roles, it is extremely common for headhunters to be used by organizations and candidates. In others, it is unusual or only done for senior-level positions. This is a great question to ask as you conduct informational interviews with professionals.

Creating a Job Search Plan (for Non-Faculty Positions)

When you are ready to begin your job search, it can be helpful to start with a plan and job search system to keep track of your goals, the actions you wish to take, and the steps you have taken. What websites will you visit? Who will you talk to? What organizations will you target? As you read the information below on how to conduct a comprehensive job search, make note of the tasks you will need to complete.

Determine how much time you have each week to dedicate to your job search. Then devise specific job search action steps, such as "Identify people to reach out to who are connected to positions." For each action step, determine specific tasks to complete, the approximate time to complete them, and the due date.

You might find the following table format helpful for organizing your job search plan and tasks:

Action Step	Task for Completion	Approximate Time to Complete	Due Date
Identify people to reach out to who are connected to positions	Make a list of each position applied to	1 hour	Sept 4
	Conduct research on LinkedIn to find people who are connected to position	2-4 hours	Sept 5
	Draft template message for reaching out	1 hour	Sept 6
	Tweak to personalize each message and send	2-3 hours	Sept 7

Other weekly job search tasks might include the following:

- Conducting informational interviews
- Attending meet-ups, events, professional meetings
- Keeping in touch with connections, writing thank you and check-in notes
- Searching online for job postings
- Tailoring resume and cover letter for each application

- Searching for individuals who are connected to job postings and reaching out to them
- Researching target organizations and people
- Keeping track of job search efforts
- Staying current and up-to-date on industry news
- Celebrating milestones and accomplishments

Getting to Know Yourself

Once you have a plan in place, start your job search preparation by reviewing your education and work-related background, skills, and experiences. In addition, you want to be clear about the types of jobs you are seeking and aware of the latest issues and developments in your line of work. Below are two exercises to help you to get to know yourself, your skills, and your experiences for your job search.

Past Accomplishments Exercise

- First, write each of your past jobs, educational experiences, internships, and/or volunteer opportunities in a table similar to the one below (if you’ve had many job-related experiences, choose the most important ones).
- In the second column, record your accomplishments related to each experience. What are you proud of? What action did you take that had a result? What were you praised for or recognized for? Note that you may have more than one accomplishment per experience.
- In the third column, consider the skills you used to take each action or reach the accomplishment, which represent transferable skills or skills that you can apply to other jobs.
- Finally, in the fourth column, note any other skills you used in that experience that have not yet been listed.
- Circle the skills you especially want to highlight in your job search documents and materials.

Note: this exercise will also be helpful when you begin to prepare for interviews.

Past Jobs, Educational Experiences, Internships, Volunteering	Accomplishments at Each Experience	Skills for Each Accomplishment	Other Skills Gained at Job
Research Analyst at Company ABC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrote a training manual for new research interns; this helped decrease the time taken to train them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and editing • Initiative • Conceptualization • Leadership • Resourcefulness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis • Research design • Survey development • Collaboration with other team members

Job Listings Exercise

Gather 5-10 recent or current job postings for your target position. Review them and answer the following questions:

→ What is the employer asking for in the “requirements” section? (e.g., skills and characteristics)

→ What words or phrases appear across the job descriptions?

→ What skills are repeated in the postings?

→ What keywords are repeated in the postings?

→ What are the matches between the skills you circled in the Accomplishments exercise and the skills and keywords listed in this exercise?

Your answer to the last question will result in an important list of skills and keywords that you will want to highlight throughout your job search materials. Do not lose this list, as you want to refer to it frequently!

Occupation, Industry, and Company Research

In addition to getting to know yourself better by reviewing your skills and experiences, be sure to conduct research on the occupation, industry, and any companies or organizations that you would like to target. Visit the professional association websites in your field. You might also follow professionals in your industry on Twitter or LinkedIn, who will likely share top news in that field. When you conduct informational interviews, find out how those professionals are keeping up-to-date with the latest developments. You want to be aware of the most recent trends, issues, and happenings as you create your job search materials and prepare for interviews.

Updating Your Job Search Materials

Next, it is time to focus on updating your job search materials, including your resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile, portfolio or work examples (if applicable), 15 second introduction, business cards, references, and online presence.

Where to Find Non-Faculty Jobs

There are three primary ways to find out about jobs, which are through:

- Connections
- Online job postings
- Recruiters and headhunters

Although actual percentages vary from about 60 to 90%, most experts agree that the vast majority of jobs are secured through a networking connection. Thus, it makes sense to concentrate most of your job searching time and effort on reaching out to your connections and making new ones. This doesn't mean you should ignore all other methods of finding jobs; it is actually beneficial to vary your job search methods, but you also want to be cognizant of which methods tend to yield a better return.

Connections

You can read all about how to network and expand your connections in the networking section of this guide. Be sure to include a networking strategy as part of your job search plan. Such tasks might include searching for and reaching out to individuals who are working at your target organizations to conduct informational interviews, attending professional association meetings in your field to network and meet new people, and getting back in touch with your existing network.

Online Job Postings

Perusing online job postings can be a beneficial part of your job search plan. Keep in mind that approximately 10-20% of jobs are secured through this method, thus you do not want to spend a large portion of your time focusing only on responding to online job ads. You may want to choose a handful of job posting websites that you feel will be most helpful to you. Then set up RSS feeds or emails on these websites so that you'll receive daily notifications of new job postings that meet your criteria. There can be advantages to being part of the first set of applicants to apply for a job, as some experts feel employers pay more attention in the beginning of a search. Thus, you want to know immediately when a job is posted so that you can tailor and submit your application within the next day or two.

There are essentially three types of online job posting websites: general job websites, industry-specific job websites, and company/organization websites. All can be helpful to you during your job search.

- **General Job Websites:** These types of websites are more open and inclusive of all types of jobs or of at least a wide range of opportunities. They often include an advanced search function with multiple options of criteria to effectively narrow the postings to a list that is more manageable and digestible.
 - Job listing aggregators, such as [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) or [Simplyhired.com](https://www.simplyhired.com), collect job postings from thousands of websites online. These are therefore good comprehensive databases to check out.
 - [Idealist.org](https://www.idealists.org): This is a well-known and comprehensive database of non-profit and NGO jobs around the world.
 - [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com): The advantage of viewing jobs within LinkedIn is that the system may give you information on who posted the job (usually a recruiter for large organizations), and therefore you may be able to reach out to this individual to express your interest (as well as apply for the position as instructed). Even if the system does not identify a source, you will be able to see if anyone in your network works at that company.
 - [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com): Although not a direct job posting platform, companies, recruiters, and industry leaders will often tweet links to open positions. Take some time to follow these individuals, and you can even create a "job search" list within Twitter of these folks to help screen out everyone else.

- **Industry-specific Job Websites:** Another category of job posting websites include those that focus on a certain field or type of job. For example, if you are looking for jobs in marketing, you may be able to find specific marketing job websites by reviewing the following:
 - **Professional Associations:** You may already be well aware of the prominent professional associations connected to your field. Professional associations are entities that exist to bring professionals in a certain field together to share best practices, network, and advance the industry. Often they have a website, which may list job-specific resources as well as actual job postings. Sometimes you will need to become a member before you are able to access the jobs database. In addition, many professional associations also have a group on LinkedIn, and members are often allowed to post jobs on that forum as well.
 - **Niche Websites:** Many fields have job posting websites that focus on open positions only in their area of work. You can often find out about these through a professional association, research via a general search engine, or word of mouth.
 - **Company and Organization Websites:** As part of your job search plan, you may want to make a list of companies or organizations where you would like to work. Devising this list may involve doing some research beforehand to determine which organizations will be a better fit for you. Sometimes these jobs will be posted elsewhere as well, such as on LinkedIn or another job posting website, but sometimes they will not. Thus it is advantageous to keep your eye directly on the company's website.

After applying to a position posted online, if you do not have any existing connections to the position and company, it can be helpful to try to track one down using LinkedIn or other search tools. The best case is if you are able to identify an employee who might be the hiring manager or person to whom the position would report. If you are able to find this individual's email address (or if you are able to send a message via LinkedIn), you might consider sending a note of interest. This type of message is different than an informational interview request. In this case you are simply introducing yourself, mentioning that you applied for the position, and sharing that you are enthusiastic about the opportunity. Do not expect a reply; often times hiring managers refrain from communicating with potential candidates during a search (aside from setting up interviews). The point of this communication is to simply reiterate your interest and stand out amongst all the applicants.

Here is an example of a message:

Dear Jane Smith:

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Emily Seamone, and I just applied for the [POSITION TITLE] at [COMPANY NAME], a position for which I believe I am a great fit. I have a PhD in educational psychology and experience researching and analyzing public school assessment data, similar to the focus of your department.

I am sure your job posting generated a large response, and I thus thought it would be helpful to reach out via email/LinkedIn to express my strong interest in this role and your company. I hope to have the opportunity to speak with you further about how I can help support your department and company's goals.

*Sincerely,
Emily Seamone*

After the Application

The challenging part for job applicants is the waiting period after they have submitted their materials. If you are selected for an interview, the employer will reach out to you via email or phone to schedule an interview. If you are not selected, you may receive a template email saying "This is to inform you that you have not been chosen for an interview," or you may not hear anything at all. If you have a contact at the company who referred you to the job and it has been quite some time since you applied, you could reach out to him/her once to check in and reiterate your interest. After that you need to let it go, as hard as it may be. The length of time you will need to wait after submitting your application can vary greatly from job to job and organization to organization. It could be one week, three weeks, two months, or more. There is really no way to know exactly what the employer's timeline is and if there are other factors that have gotten in the way. The best way to handle this is to move on to the next job application while keeping track of what you have submitted so far.

FACULTY JOB SEARCH PROCESS AND TIMELINE

General Process for Faculty Hiring

Looking for a faculty position is quite different from looking for other types of jobs. It is typically more structured and spans a longer time period from position posting to candidate interviews and start date. Below is a general outline of the process for applying to academic jobs; however, always keep in mind that the cycle can vary by discipline and other factors related to particular departments and schools. Talk with your adviser and others in your department including, if possible, recent graduates, to understand how the faculty job market functions in your particular field. Institutions outside of the U.S. may also follow different timelines as well as hiring practices. Be sure to conduct careful research on the particular discipline and area where the school is located to learn more about their academic hiring timeline and process.

When you go on the job market, ideally you are aiming to complete your dissertation prior to the start date of the job (typically no later than the summer before a fall semester start date) and you have a defense date scheduled. Many faculty job offers are made contingent on the candidates' receipt of their degree before their position start date. Students in some fields will hear from their faculty members that they will be more competitive once they've finished their PhD. Often, this proves to be true, though not always. Talk to your adviser and others in your department about your plans and whether they feel you are sufficiently ready to go on the market.

Many faculty openings are advertised about one year before they start; thus, most postings will come up between August and December. A search committee (typically consisting of approximately four or five faculty members and, potentially, a student or senior administrator) is responsible for posting the position in relevant journals and websites and for reviewing all completed applications that are submitted. The total number of applications will vary significantly depending on the field, school and other factors and is usually in the hundreds. Openings for postdoctoral positions or visiting assistant professorships sometimes are announced alongside tenure-track openings in the field; at other times, they are announced later or in the spring semester. (This later set of postings is often called the "secondary" job market.)

Initially, the committee will narrow the pool of first round applications to a group of individuals who will be asked for more information or invited to a conference, phone, or Skype interview. This process typically happens in the fall. Once the additional information is received and/or the interviews take place, the committee meets to create an even shorter list. In the end they will have identified their top two to five candidates who will be invited to visit the campus. Invitations may be extended both before and after winter break, and on-campus visits are typically scheduled in the spring semester.

After the campus candidate visits are completed, each visit usually lasting one to two days per candidate, the committee convenes to discuss the individuals and their interviews. They then vote on the ranking of the candidates and identify a candidate of choice.

Timeline for the Faculty Job Search

Summer (or 15 months prior to start of job, June through August)

- Meet with your adviser and other key faculty members in your field to discuss your job search plans and strategy. Get your adviser's agreement that you are ready to go on the market.
- Update your CV for the job search. Craft an academic cover letter template, as well as a dissertation abstract, teaching statement, research statement, diversity statement, writing sample, and teaching portfolio.
- Make appointments with your adviser, members of your department, and career advisers in our office to obtain feedback on your job search materials.
- Set up a file with Interfolio (an online dossier service) through the Career Planning website.
- Identify who will write your letters of recommendations. Brief your referees on your job search plans and timing and ask them whether they'll be willing to write on your behalf. If so, share your job documents with them so they can write you a strong letter of recommendation.

- Make sure you are aware of how to request a transcript and how long it takes to receive one, in case this is required.
- Begin identifying your key connections and faculty members in your network. You may want to reach out to let them know of your progress and that you will be going on the job market this fall.
- Think about what piece(s) of your research might make for a strong job talk.
- Ask your adviser and others in your department for introductions to faculty members that may or may not have position openings.
- Consider what resources and funding you will need to conduct research as a faculty member.

Fall/Winter (September through February)

- Seek out position openings through journals, publications, and websites.
- Prepare and tailor your application to the specific opening. In order to customize your application materials, research the school, department, faculty, curriculum and students when assembling your application.
- Prepare for conference, phone, and Skype interviews by practicing with others; this could be a colleague, individuals in your department, and/or a career adviser in our office.
- First round interviews via phone, Skype, and conferences tend to take place during this period.
- Plan to attend conferences in your field, whether you have an interview scheduled or not.
- Prepare for on-campus interviews and practice your job talk.
- Continue to update your adviser and other recommenders about your job search status.
- Continue searching and applying for jobs and postdocs.

Spring (March through June)

- Second round interviews typically take place between December and April.
- Offers are usually extended between March and June.
- Continue to apply and interview for late job postings and one-year appointments.
- Thank those individuals who helped you with the job search process.
- If you did not get the results you wanted, consider other options and your backup plan.

Where to Find Faculty Job Listings

In most disciplines, faculty job openings are published by academic professional organizations, for example, the Modern Language Association, the American Economic Association, or the American Mathematical Society. There are other general websites, such as those of the Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Ed, or the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium, that post faculty positions. A full list of these sites can be found on the Career Planning website.

Faculty Positions Outside of the U.S.

Given the tight academic job market in the United States, expanding your job search to include colleges and universities abroad might help you land more offers. Many U.S. universities, for example, are building international branch campuses, and these new schools need faculty members. Hiring processes vary by country and by field, so you might even be able to find international job postings when the searches in North America are largely finished for the year.

There are a few potential risks, however, associated with taking a position abroad temporarily. For example, leaving the country for an extended period of time can limit your opportunities to network with prominent U.S.-based scholars, and hiring committees in the United States sometimes look upon institutions in other countries as less prestigious — potentially making it harder for you to obtain a tenure-track job when you return. On the other hand, experience abroad can demonstrate to hiring committees that you will be a good mentor to international students (a plus, especially as more and more American schools are trying to attract top students from other countries). Be sure to discuss your options with your adviser and other people that you trust in your field.

APPLYING FOR POSTDOCS

STEM Postdocs

For many new PhDs in the STEM fields, particularly in the life sciences, a postdoctoral position is a required step along the way to a tenure-track professorship. Begin your research for postdoctoral opportunities early on, even 24 months before you plan to complete your degree. For other fields, a postdoc may provide an opportunity to develop additional skills if a first foray into the faculty job market was unsuccessful. A postdoctoral appointment might provide you with:

- A chance to move your current research in a new, innovative direction
- A chance to build new skills, or even change fields
- A chance to develop lab management skills in a new setting

How do you look for a postdoc? A good starting point is to talk with your adviser and/or committee members about labs or collaborators that might be an interesting fit for your work—and how best to contact the PI's on those projects. Perhaps you've met someone who gave a talk in your department and whose work was of interest to you. Or perhaps you met someone at a conference. These are all good ways to establish contacts. Once you've identified a few labs that might be a good fit, reach out to the faculty member in those labs/departments with a brief and well-written email about why you are interested in working there, and attach your CV. Having a prior connection to a faculty member is one of the most effective ways of finding a postdoc. This is why networking is so important.

Where else might you look for a postdoc? Well, it is likely that your field's professional association has a job posting service that may feature postdoctoral positions. Also, websites such as [Science Careers](#), [Postdocjobs](#), [Ph.D.s.org](#), and [Nature Jobs](#) post information about open positions. Many institutions have a central website in which postdoctoral positions are posted. This is fairly common in institutions with centralized offices that help postdocs manage their research and their careers, for example, [Ohio State](#), [Stanford](#), and the [University of Pennsylvania](#).

It is always worthwhile to seek your own postdoctoral funding that you can bring with you to a lab. This is particularly true if you've already identified a mentor whose work is a good fit, and s/he is willing to work with you on your application. Bringing your own funding into a postdoc position can afford you greater research independence than would a position where you relied exclusively on your principal investigators (PIs) funding for support. Both the library's [funding website](#) and the Graduate Center's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs are useful resources for finding funding opportunities.

Before accepting a postdoc, ask yourself:

- Am I truly excited about research here?
- Does this mentor seem like someone I can work with?
- Will I be able to achieve my career goals here?
- Do the other postdocs here seem relatively happy?
- Will I acquire new skills or new knowledge here?

Choose your postdocs carefully so that they can help to position you well for your next step, be it in academe, industry, or beyond.

Humanities and Social Science Postdocs

Postdoctoral fellowships—temporary positions that allow graduates to strengthen their research and/or teaching portfolios before going on the market as stronger candidates—are becoming more and more common in the humanities and social sciences. Typically lasting between one and three years, postdocs sometimes carry lighter teaching loads than faculty positions. Fellows thus have time to advance their research agendas. Applying for a postdoc can be a good option for someone who was unsuccessful in securing a tenure-track job that year. At the same time, some postdocs are themselves very competitive (for example, the Society of Fellows at the University of Chicago or Princeton University’s Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts).

Before accepting a postdoc, think about whether or not it will serve as a good stepping stone in helping you achieve your professional goals. For example:

- Will the position involve an independent research project that will strengthen your CV?
- Will the teaching requirements prevent you from making progress in your research?

Just as you’d tailor your tenure-track job applications to suit the needs of teaching versus research institutions, you should frame your postdoc applications so that you describe your work in a way that falls in line with the mission of the postdoc. And although the postdoc position can be useful in providing you the opportunity to focus on your own research, you’ll also want to emphasize in your application how you will contribute to the institution’s scholarly community.

Most postdoctoral opportunities will be published as part of your professional association’s job list. You can also find listings in *The Chronicle* and through other internet resources, such as H-Net.org.

NETWORKING

NETWORKING BASICS

What is networking? Networking simply means regularly seeking out connections with people in the career field(s) of interest to you and developing and maintaining long-term professional relationships. Many of you already do this when you exchange ideas with classmates, attend talks or conferences, or plan speaker series and other events on campus. You are networking even when you chat casually with someone who is standing in line with you at a store. Whatever your career goals may be, networking should be an important part of your professional life, if it isn't already. That said, graduate students are often less than enthusiastic about networking and making small talk with people they've just met. Though you may never love doing this, it is something that gets easier with practice and as you gain confidence in yourself and your professional path.

Benefits of Networking

There are many benefits to networking. First, you can often gain “insider” information about industries, companies, organizations, career paths, jobs, and other opportunities. Another benefit to networking is that some people may introduce you to their connections as well. Finally, connections can offer career advice and feedback, such as reviewing your resume or CV to give you industry-specific tips.

The key to networking is that it is a two-way street, but it may not be this way immediately. Your connections may do something for you at this point in your career, and down the road, you may do something for them. The idea is that networking is a life-long endeavor, not something you do just when you need a job.

For some people, networking is something that comes naturally. For others, it may take a conscious effort. If networking makes you nervous, try to keep these points in mind:

- It is a normal part of being a professional, whatever your field.
- Networking is a give and take process. You have something to offer as well—your expertise, skills, knowledge, insights, and connections.
- Most people enjoy talking with others and sharing their knowledge.
- You are not asking for a job; you are simply getting to know someone and asking for information.

Where and with Whom to Network

There are many people in your life with whom you can network; in addition to professionals in your field, don't forget about past colleagues, classmates, professors, alumni, school groups, family, and friends.

There are also many places you can find people with whom to network, including the following:

- Online social networks (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest)
- Professional associations (e.g., American History Association, American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology)
- School alumni networks
- Conferences (see professional associations, which often host annual and regional conferences)
- Networking events (e.g., industry gatherings)
- Panels (e.g., alumni career panels at the GC)
- Social events and gatherings
- Classes
- Trainings
- Volunteering
- Leisure activities
- MeetUp groups
- Industry groups

Networking and Social Media

It is essential to have a robust and professional web presence regardless of your planned career path. Social media can be an important part of your networking strategy and job search. It can take a good deal of work to build a website or social media presence, especially as these things will require your continued time and attention. GC students can get help with this from several sources. The Graduate Center Digital Initiatives offer workshops, one-on-one assistance, and many online resources for building your own website and developing a fluency with digital tools. Graduate Center librarians are also excellent people to consult on both the how-to's and implications of the various forms of making your scholarship public.

That said, what follows are some basic tips on creating or strengthening your online presence. First, you want your work, experience, and expertise to be visible. Being online will help spread the word about you and your research and/or work; this will help you create relationships with other scholars and/or professionals. You can use social media to establish yourself as a rising scholar in your field, keep tabs on new projects and ideas in your fields, and meet others with similar interests. Second, having these online profiles and tools will raise your rank in Google searches, and will help bury aspects that may be less positive (e.g., low scores on Rate My Professors) or less professional. Third, as a graduate student looking for a job, you may be “Googled” by the hiring managers or search committee members at the companies or institutions to which you apply. You want them to read about your positive professional persona, not just your social activities (or nothing at all).

Which online platforms and tools should you explore? Below are several options, including websites that focus on professionals in general as well as those in academia. The social media platforms all involve creating some sort of personal profile, and give an opportunity to connect or network with other professionals. Some even act as reference managements systems, allowing you to organize your research. Pick and choose which ones might work best for you; by no means do you need to be on all of them or even several.

LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook

LinkedIn is deemed the professional online network, and thus is the one of the best ones to join for online networking. On your personal profile, you can detail your expertise and research interests, as well as share research you have published. Twitter is used by people in a wide variety of career fields. Check to see if people in your area of interest are following each other and tweeting about their research and the industry. This is another way to connect with other scholars and develop relationships by sharing others' work as well as your own. Facebook may seem more social than professional; however, you may find that your colleagues want to connect with you here as well. Take a curatorial approach to your use of these media—be thoughtful in your use of them and monitor your privacy settings carefully.

Personal Website or Blog

In addition to the tools above, you may want to create your own website for pulling together all the different aspects of your graduate career. You can use the CUNY Academic Commons or OpenCUNY.org to create your own site. You might want to include a professional photo, perhaps the same one you've uploaded to other online sites. On the home page of your website, you may want to include a brief summary of your background in research and teaching. The other pages can highlight your CV, teaching information (syllabi, course descriptions), publications, and presentations. You can embed videos of your presentations or teaching, add links to academic articles as well as public writing, and include student projects.

Academic-Specific Sites

There are many online spaces where you can showcase your academic work. CUNY has its own repository for the research of its faculty, staff, and students: CUNY Academic Works. Many of the large academic organizations have an online commons as well, such as the MLA Commons. Some of these are interdisciplinary, such as HASTAC. Some fields still use email listservs as the main space for sharing information and ideas. Faculty members and your fellow graduate students are often good sources of information about these types of resources.

Informational Interviews (for Non-Faculty Positions)

An informational interview is a brief meeting (approximately 20-30 minutes) with a professional to gather career information and develop a new relationship. It is most appropriate for those who are looking to learn more about career paths that are unfamiliar. It also is one of the best ways to get to know a particular individual professionally. Thus, if you are targeting a specific company or just want to get to know someone in the field, you can suggest meeting in person (perhaps for coffee) or talking on the phone to discuss the field and learn more about that person's career. You won't be asking for a job, but you can keep in touch, build on the start of your relationship, and see what transpires.

The great thing about informational interviews is that you are not only gathering information about a career field, but at the same time you are building a new connection and practicing a low-stress form of interviewing. In an informational interview, you can ask your contact about a variety of career-related topics, including more information about the field, his/her company, the individual's career path, his/her particular role, and a typical work day.

There are many benefits to asking professionals these career-related questions. First, you can get a sense as to whether you might enjoy this occupation and if you are a fit with this person's company. Second, you might gain particular insider information you can use when applying for a job at the company. For example, if you know the department is focusing on a new project, you can detail in your cover letter how your skills and experience would benefit this particular endeavor.

Depending on how the conversation unfolds, you might even feel comfortable asking for feedback on your resume or CV as well as asking questions pertaining to a job search within the field. Keep in mind that even though you might ask about the best way to search for jobs in the field, you are still not asking for a job. Finally, at the end of your conversation, you should mention how helpful the person has been and can ask if s/he knows of any other people that would be beneficial for you to talk to.

The informational interview should be treated seriously from start to finish. After you identify individuals to interview, reach out to them via email or social media with a brief, professional note. Here is an example of what you might say:

Dear Dr. Furlong:

I came across your profile in the American Political Science Association group on LinkedIn, and noticed we have a similar background in terms of degree and interests. I am a student at the Graduate Center studying political science and will be completing my dissertation next year. Once I graduate, I am interested in applying my research, writing, and previous non-profit experience to the program evaluation field.

If you'd be willing, I would greatly appreciate a chance to schedule a brief (20-30 minute) informational interview with you to talk about the field, your experiences, and your career path. I could do this either via phone or in-person, whichever is most convenient for you. Of course if there is anything I can do for you I would be more than happy to do so.

Thank you very much for considering this request, and I hope to talk to you soon.

*Sincerely,
Emily Seamone*

Prior to the meeting, you should research your contact, his/her company, and the industry, just as you would for a job interview. Develop a list of questions you have for your interviewee (see the [Quintessential Careers Informational Interview Tutorial](#) for some ideas). Dress professionally for your informational interview if you will be meeting in person; you don't necessarily need to be in a suit, although business attire is recommended. Bring copies of your resume or CV, but only share these materials if you are asked for them or if you request

feedback on your documents. Finally, be sure to follow-up with a thank you email within 24 hours. If you feel the conversation went well, invite the individual to connect with you on LinkedIn.

Last but not least, keep in touch with your new connection. If you took his/her advice and talked to someone s/he recommended, let them know when you do and how helpful it was. If you see a job posting at that person's company, send an email stating, "I noticed the X position on your company's website, which I am really excited about and plan to submit an application. May I list your name as someone I have talked to about your company and the department in my cover letter?"

Networking Events and Opportunities

If you want to expand your network within your field, one of the best ways is by attending professional association events in your industry. Professional associations, or non-profit organizations that support a particular field, often hold meetings, conferences, trainings, and other programs throughout each year. Volunteer to join one of the association's committees to become more involved and get to know the active members. If you are not aware of the professional associations in your targeted field, search for them via the [Professional Association Directory Search](#). You can also find industry-based networking opportunities through [MeetUp.com](#).

Other networking opportunities exist right in your school. When someone comes to speak in your department, talk with that person afterwards about their work. (We've known many scientists who find postdocs this way.) Ask your adviser to introduce you to people at an upcoming academic conference. Furthermore, check with the alumni associations of the schools from which you have graduated to view any upcoming networking possibilities.

Go to as many of these events as your schedule allows. Perhaps attending one every couple of months will suffice, but if you are actively searching for a job, you may want to attend more when possible. During these gatherings, simply focus on getting to know people. Approach individuals who are standing alone or in small groups. Then introduce yourself, perhaps with a brief 15 second pitch about yourself. This pitch can be a basic introduction, such as:

My name is Jon Smith, and I'll be graduating from the CUNY Graduate Center next year with a degree in political science. My specialties are research, writing, and non-profits; thus, I'm looking to transition into a program evaluation role upon graduation.

After you introduce yourself, ask questions to learn more about the other person and his/her career. Examples include:

- What brings you here this evening?
- How long have you been a member of this professional association?
- How did you get started in this field/line of work?

It's helpful to have business cards on hand when you attend conferences, talks, or networking events. Exchange business cards with those that you meet, and then after the event, reach out and connect via social media with those that you clicked with the most. Some of the GC doctoral programs provide PhD students with official business cards for a small fee once they advance to level III; your program's assistant program officer should have more information. You also can use a service such as VistaPrint to order free or inexpensive business cards.

NETWORKING FOR FACULTY POSITIONS

Networking in academia is in many ways little different from networking outside of academia. In-person networking among academics typically takes place at conferences in a specific discipline, professional association meetings, within a department, through collaborative research or through direct outreach. The main difference in networking practices for those looking for faculty positions is that you usually do not follow up on your job materials once they've been sent to the search committee (other than to confirm that they were received if you have any doubts). You simply wait for the committee to contact you. Informational interviewing is also uncommon in faculty position searches, though you should take any conversations with faculty members at other institutions as a chance to learn more about what it's like to work in different types of institutions.

Conferences and Meetings

Conferences in your discipline offer an opportunity to network with other scholars and share your work. Early in your graduate career, find out where calls for papers in your field are published; these circulate many months before the date of a given conference. Networking can occur casually as you attend the conference sessions, panels, papers, and events. Try to make yourself as available as possible to meet others. Use every opportunity at your disposal to share your research with other scholars in your discipline. This provides many benefits, most importantly you receive critical feedback on your research while ensuring others are aware of your work in the discipline.

In addition, you can plan ahead of time to meet with specific individuals. Make a list of the scholars whom you'd like to meet. If possible, attend their conference sessions and approach them afterward to introduce yourself briefly and comment about the presentation. You could also contact scholars prior to the conference to arrange a brief meeting over coffee or a meal. Another way to meet members of your field is to attend the conference business meetings or subspecialty meetings. You can volunteer to serve a role in a particular group, such as the note taker or conference planner; doing so will give you natural opportunities to get to know the other members. If your professional association in your discipline also holds meetings outside of the annual conference, this can be another way to meet others in your field in a smaller, often less hectic, setting.

Attending an Academic Conference

Regular attendance at professional conferences is essential for anyone who is hoping to build a career as a faculty member, and can help you to build skills that are useful even outside of it. You might ask: "Why is this?" Here are a few reasons:

- Presenting your work is one of the best reasons to attend a conference. Learning to present with confidence and in a way that connects with your audience is a skill that will serve you well no matter what your eventual career path. Presenting also gives you the chance to receive feedback from fellow scholars and experts in your field. Such feedback can help you further develop your research and ideas. If you would like help preparing your conference presentation, our graduate student writing consultants offer peer feedback in one-on-one meetings.
- Making connections with others in your field is very important to becoming a successful academic. You want people to know your name and your work. This is true not only for graduate students, but for faculty members as well. When you go up for tenure, your institution will likely ask scholars in your field to give a thoughtful assessment of your work. So, begin cultivating the skill of connecting with people early in your career.
- Meeting others and hearing about their work will help you get ideas for the directions in which you'd like your work to go, as well as ideas for potential collaborations. This is probably the best reason for attending conference sessions and events.
- Seeing how people in your field present their work and how they field questions from the audience will help you to hone your own presentation style in a way that's appropriate for your field. Do people always use Power Point? Do they read? What kind of images do they show, if any? For those engaging speakers that you see, what helps to make their talk more enjoyable for the audience?

Making the Most of a Conference

- Before you go, review the conference agenda and attendee list. Identify a few individuals you would like to meet. Conduct research on them and perhaps even reach out ahead of time to arrange a meeting at the conference. If your adviser is attending the conference, s/he may be able to introduce you to that person.
- Write and rehearse a short pitch or introduction to you and your research. You will find yourself repeating this over and over.
- Bring business cards to exchange with people you meet. Write on the back of cards you receive how/when you met the person and anything you discussed.
- Challenge yourself to interact with new people during breaks and receptions. Be sure to attend the social functions, even if you are tired by the end of the day. These are all ways to make new contacts.
- Shortly after the conference, follow up with your new contacts to keep the networking going. Connect online via email, Facebook, Twitter, or other digital networking tools mentioned above.

Funding

The one drawback of conference attendance is that it can be expensive. Below are some ideas about where to look for funding. Plan ahead.

- The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs offers travel funds (up to \$300) to full-time doctoral students who are within seven years of their first semester of enrollment. Students must be presenting a paper or poster, or actively participating in the conference to receive funding. Attendance alone is not funded. Funding is awarded in the spring and the fall (the fall includes the summer preceeding it). Funding is limited, so be sure to apply as soon as applications can be accepted. Students can receive only one grant per academic year and must be listed in the conference program as being affiliated with "The Graduate Center, CUNY."
- If you have been consistently teaching at CUNY, you may be eligible for a professional development grant from the CUNY Professional Staff Congress. All of the information is on the PSC website. If you are uncertain as to whether you qualify, you should get in touch with them.
- Does the conference or professional organization itself fund graduate student travel? Be sure to search the conference/organization website for possibilities (and deadlines).
- Our colleagues at the library have put together a great resource on funding (see the "Grants & Funding" research guide). The H-net.org announcement list is also a great resource for those in the humanities and social sciences.
- If your travel could be coordinated with a visit to a nearby archive or library, it might be worthwhile to do so, as those places sometimes have a small amount of funds available for visiting researchers.

APPLYING FOR GRANTS

Each grant you receive provides you with an important line for your CV (not to mention the crucial added bonus of helping with the high cost of living and studying in New York or doing research elsewhere). Applying for funding takes time for both researching and writing the application. Most grants will have deadlines that are six months to a year or more before the funding is awarded. External funding—whether from government agencies, private industries, foundations, or nonprofits—is frequently more competitive, and thus sometimes even more impressive on a CV. Even small external grants, such as travel funds from libraries, can be worth pursuing, as winning them demonstrates your ability to apply successfully for funding.

The Graduate Center Library maintains an online list of grant databases (see the “Grants and Funding” research guide). Many departments also maintain student listservs and manage bulletin boards in the student lounges where information about funding opportunities can be shared. Faculty members, especially your adviser, should also be able to recommend potential grant sources. Make sure to stay in the loop.

GC Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (RSP) manages GC applications for, and awards of, governmental and foundation funding. The office also provides students with assistance on grant proposal preparation and submission. Many external grant applications must be processed through this office, particularly ones that are submitted online through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) (the federal government’s online application system), the Electronic Research Administration (for the National Institutes of Health and grantor agencies), or Fastlane (for the National Science Foundation). To receive help with an application, send an email to rsp@gc.cuny.edu with NEW PROPOSAL in the subject heading, and include a description of the project and prospective funder.

Writing a Grant Proposal: General Tips

- **Apply early and often.** It’s crucial that you begin searching and applying for grants as soon as you can, and begin preparing applications long before the deadlines approach. Not only can it take months to research and write an application and, if necessary, obtain letters of recommendation and work with the GC Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, application deadlines can be up to ten months before the actual award itself is implemented.
- **It’s also important not to count on just one or two applications.** Many grants are quite competitive, and some students can get discouraged if their first applications are rejected. Your odds increase, however, with each application you send in—and as you get more skilled and experienced at preparing proposals.
- **Read the grant description and eligibility requirements closely, and tailor your application.** If descriptions are unclear and you’re not sure if your research fits the grant criteria, check the website to see if a list of previous awardees and their research topics is available. You can also contact the program officer for clarification. International students and permanent residents should also carefully read the citizenship requirements. Keep the funding agency’s description in mind as you’re writing proposals, and tailor your applications to meet their criteria by borrowing the agency’s own terminology. You’ll need to indicate how your project will make a contribution, one that meets the goals and aims of the agency.
- **Follow the instructions.** While this tip might seem obvious, neglecting to carefully read application directions is the biggest mistake that applicants, even senior scholars, make. It’s best to make things as easy as possible for your reviewers to give you maximum points as they evaluate your application. Most funding agencies have strict deadlines, and applications will not be accepted if all documents are not received by the cut-off date.
- **Be clear.** Avoid using jargon, as reviewers might not be from your specific field, and write as clearly and concisely as possible. The reviewers should also get a clear sense of your methodology and plan of action (for example, you might need to include archive locations, a detailed budget and/or timeframe).

PREPARING YOUR WRITTEN APPLICATION MATERIALS

Cover Letter (for Non-Faculty Positions)

Most non-faculty positions will ask candidates to send a cover letter and a resume. Many employers will read your cover letters carefully, particularly if they are looking to hire someone with good writing skills. A cover letter is your chance to make a case as to why you are the best person for a particular job.

It's important to write individual cover letters for each job to which you apply, even though strong cover letters can take time to construct. Employers can easily recognize a form letter that has been sent out blindly to many employers.

Before writing your letter, take a close look at the job posting. What is this employer looking for? Where are the points of connection between you and this job? What can you do for this employer? Pay particular attention to the "Preferred Qualifications" or "Required Qualifications" sections in the job posting for clues as to what is important to the employer. What is the match between the preferred qualifications and what you offer? Be specific about your experience and your interest in the position. Think carefully about your audience.

A cover letter for a non-academic position should be succinct and no more than one page. It generally consists of three to four paragraphs.

First Paragraph

The first paragraph of your letter should introduce yourself, state which position you are applying for and how you heard about the job. If you learned about the position through a contact or person that works at the organization, be sure to mention this here (don't forget to get permission from the person for inclusion in your letter).

In addition, be sure to state specifically why you are interested in this particular company and position. Employers want to see that you are truly interested in working at their organization, not just randomly applying for a job. This is the place to express enthusiasm for the opportunity. Applicants often raise these sentiments in their last paragraph, which is a good place to reiterate your interest in the company and position. However, if an employer does not attentively read your entire cover letter, this crucial piece of communication will be missed.

Finally, the first paragraph should also set up the rest of the letter by outlining how your background makes you a good fit for the position. This is typically one sentence that summarizes what you offer and what you will be highlighting in the next paragraph(s). Note that the skills and experiences you outline in this introduction sentence should be of importance to the employer.

Second Paragraph

The second paragraph contains more details about your qualifications and achievements. If you stated in the introduction paragraph that you offer research, writing, and interpersonal skills, these are the areas you should highlight in the second paragraph. You can do so by showing how you developed these skills and knowledge, particularly through examples from your education, work experience, volunteer opportunities, and internships. Be sure to keep your descriptions positive. It is best to avoid pointing out any weaknesses or lack of experience with statements such as "Although I do not have X, Y, and Z..." Instead, focus on what you do offer.

If you are applying to a position that is not clearly related to your past education and experience, it may be beneficial to explain your interests further in the second paragraph. This will help the employer understand why you are applying to the position. Your explanation does not need much detail; keep it brief and positive.

Final Paragraph

The final paragraph should again summarize what you offer, re-emphasize your interest in and enthusiasm for the position and organization, and encourage the employer to contact you.

Cover Letter (for Faculty Positions)

Every application you submit should be accompanied by a cover letter that introduces yourself and explains why your background makes you a strong candidate. This is also sometimes referred to as a “letter of intent.” Where a job description is silent on the provision of a cover letter you should submit your application with one.

The goal of your CV is to communicate what you have achieved academically, both as to scholarly achievements as well as with regard to your engagement with your discipline. The goal of your cover letter is to define how you’ll do (and excel at) the job to which you’re applying and to highlight your most salient academic qualifications, training and experience. A cover letter has to “sell” you to a certain extent, so you must speak convincingly of your own potential as a scholar in your cover letter.

Writing good cover letters takes time. Ideally, a cover letter should be tailored specifically to both the job advertised and the type of institution to which you are applying. This can be challenging when you are applying to many positions over a short period of time. In that case, you might draft language about your teaching and research that can be easily tailored to individual positions.

Think carefully about your audience, the position, and the school to which you are applying. Conduct research to facilitate your letter writing by studying the job description, reviewing the school and department’s websites, and by reading faculty profiles. Find out if anyone in your department knows the school to which you are applying. What are the school and department’s priorities? What is the student body like? Who are the faculty and what are their backgrounds and interests? What courses are offered by the department?

Keep in mind that while reading your letter, the committee wants to get a sense of what you can bring to the department and institution. How will you compliment the department and what will you add to it? What gap does your training, research and expertise fill? How will you contribute to your field and the standing of the department?

Basic Format

Letters in the STEM fields are typically a single page, while letters in the humanities and social sciences can be as long as two pages (single spaced). You may address the letter to the person named in the job listing or begin with “Dear Members of the Search Committee.” In some GC programs, students use program letterhead; in others, they do not. Ask your EO or APO what students in your program typically do. Finally, be absolutely sure that your letter has no errors, grammatical, spelling or otherwise! Have someone read it closely—not just for content, but also for typos, spelling errors, and other mistakes that are easy to make and easy to miss.

First Paragraph

The first paragraph of your letter should state which position you are applying for and how you heard about the job. It should also set up the rest of the letter by briefly outlining why your background makes you a good fit. State when you plan to finish your degree and defend your dissertation. Be sure to use positive and confident language, such as “I will be...” rather than “I plan to...” Your overall tone in this opening paragraph should express enthusiasm, although be careful not to overdo it. Also avoid casual, non-academic language, such as “I would love...” or “I am excited...”

Middle Paragraphs

In subsequent paragraphs, you will detail your qualifications and achievements. All faculty cover letters will most likely include information about your research and teaching experience. However, the priorities of the particular school and department will help you decide which area to emphasize more than the other. For applications to major research universities or institutions with a research emphasis, lead with your research and devote more cover letter real estate to this area than to your teaching.

In the research section, include details about your research, any presentations or publications that have resulted from your dissertation, and grants and awards you have received. Why is your research interesting? Why is it important? Mention any additional research projects you have been involved in. You will also want to discuss your plans for future research, and thoughts about publications and books stemming from your work. This will

show the committee that you are thinking as a scholar and colleague rather than as a graduate student. It also shows that you are proactively planning your scholarly agenda.

You will then most likely devote a paragraph to your teaching experience and philosophy, discussing the courses you have taught and designed, courses you could teach (both introductory and more advanced courses), and a brief statement about your overall teaching philosophy. Remember to express interest in teaching the institution's particular student body.

If you are applying to a position at a community college or small liberal arts college, your emphasis will be reversed by focusing first on your teaching instead of research. Start by discussing your teaching experience and philosophy, as well as details noted in the above paragraph. If you have taught specific courses that you would be expected to teach (if mentioned in the job posting), be sure to detail this point. On the other hand, if you have not taught such classes but they are related to your field and research, talk about how well prepared you are to handle those courses.

When talking about your overall teaching philosophy, you need not go into as much depth as you would in a separate statement. Think about how you engage students and help them learn about the material. Think about your teaching evaluations and the strengths that your students have noted. Do you involve new pedagogies or technologies? How do you handle different learning styles and backgrounds? How has your teaching evolved over time? You may want to include other ways you have supported students, such as mentoring, advising, and participating in non-academic activities. Also talk about how you have or will involve students, particularly undergraduates, in your research agenda.

For applications to institutions with a teaching emphasis, you will still include information about your research background, although it will not be as lengthy and detailed. You might include an overview of your research focus, dissertation, publications and presentations resulting from your dissertation, and future research plans.

If university service is mentioned in the job description or the institution has a mission that emphasizes service, you may want to include a few sentences about your experience in this area, including service within academic, community, and professional realms.

Final Paragraph

The final paragraph should summarize and again emphasize your strengths, interest, and enthusiasm for the position and school. If you have a special connection to the school or region, such as once having lived in the area, you might include that here. Give an overview of the documents included in the packet. Finally, mention how you can be reached and if you are attending any upcoming conferences in your field.

Curriculum Vitae

Your Curriculum Vitae (also called a "CV" or "Vita") is an academic autobiography. It may be 2, 3, or more pages long depending on your field and experience. If you continue on to a position as a faculty member, it will grow. You will submit a CV when you apply for faculty positions at colleges and universities, compete for funding opportunities, and further along in your career when you are considered for tenure. Your CV is a comprehensive, evolving document reflecting all aspects of your work as a scholar, teacher, and professional colleague; it should be carefully organized, thoughtfully spaced, and intentionally structured, presenting information in an order designed to address the target audiences' needs.

There is no set order for presenting information on a CV, but remember that your first page is the most important real estate. Put the information you really want to emphasize on the first page. This decision is often based on the primary role defined for the position to which you are applying. So, for a primarily teaching position, you might list your teaching experience immediately following your contact details, educational and honors data. For a primarily research focused position, you might list your research focus, experience and publications before your teaching experience. For most CVs the order of presented information is listed below, but clearly this can vary by discipline and position, as well as how recently someone has completed his or her PhD.

Prioritize the succeeding order of information based also on what you believe is considered most important in your field, to the particular college or university, and to the position (e.g., publications, prestigious awards and honors). Be sure to put your last name and page number on all pages beginning with page 2. Most of you are currently in a degree program, so it is likely that Education will be the first category on your CV.

CV formats and conventions will differ from field to field. Some will emphasize particular areas more than others. As you prepare your materials, be sure to look at examples from faculty (particularly younger faculty) in your department. Your program may even have a template that they can share with you—this is a good starting point.

Your CV will likely include the following information:

- Name and contact information
- Education - may include dissertation title, names of adviser and committee members
- Honors, Awards, Grants, and Fellowships
- Teaching and/or Research Experience
- Publications
- Conference Papers, Presentations, and Invited Talks
- Professional Memberships

Here are some additional categories sometimes included in a CV:

- Teaching and Research Interests
- Professional Experience (relevant experience often outside the university setting)
- Languages
- Skills
- University Service
- Advising and Mentoring
- Certifications/Professional Licensure

Formatting Your CV

You want your CV to be organized, clear, and easy to read. Include 1 inch margins on all sides. Use headings to categorize and split long lists into subcategories. For example, multiple conference presentations might be divided by topic, professional affiliation, and so on.

Be consistent. What does this mean? It means that if your first heading (EDUCATION:) is in bold, all caps, and ends with a colon, all of your headings need to look this way. It means that if you write your first date 05.2012-12.2012, all of your dates need to look this way; and be in the same location on the page.

Avoid sloppiness. Check repeatedly for spelling and formatting errors. If you are not a good editor, find someone who is and who can help you. Use bold, italics, and underlining sparingly. Use only one font (Times New Roman, Arial, and Calibri are good), and choose one that is clear and readable (recommended minimum font size is 11). Your CV should be as long as necessary to reflect the expected information.

Resumes

If a CV is your autobiography, a resume is a snapshot of you. A resume is not meant to be comprehensive; it is a marketing tool that should focus on the experience you have that is most relevant to the job or types of jobs to which you are applying. It is likely that the employer who reads it will only glance at it for 10-15 seconds on her first pass. Thus, your qualifications really need to stand out.

Resume Basics

A resume should be organized, structured, and easy to read. It should not be any longer than 1-2 pages. The margins can be less than 1 inch all around (but not too close to the edges). Font size should be readable for the vast majority of people (usually an 11 or 12 size font). You may use bold, italics, and underlining on your resume, although sparingly is best.

The layout of the resume should be in a reverse chronological format for your education and professional experiences; this is called a “Chronological Resume.” Another format that is acceptable today is a “Hybrid Resume,” which divides your experiences into relevant categories based on the specific job to which you are applying. The experiences are sorted in reverse chronological order within each category. A third category, a “Functional Resume,” lists skills at the top of the resume, followed by a brief job history below.

A resume is composed of several sections. The main ones include the following:

Name and Contact Information

Your name should be the largest item on your resume and in bold. The next line will include your street address, email address, and phone number. In addition, you can add links to other relevant information, such as to your LinkedIn profile or a website highlighting your work.

Education

“Education” will likely be the first section after your name and contact information for those who are current students (though there are exceptions to this rule). Include all your degrees in this section. Depending on the types of jobs to which you are applying, it may be helpful to include your dissertation or thesis title, if you have one. In some cases you may also want to include relevant coursework if it relates to the job. If you’ve had other educational experiences that did not culminate in a degree but are relevant to the work you are pursuing, you may include a “Professional Development” or “Continuing Education” subsection under education to succinctly list these experiences.

Experience

Experience will likely be the next section. Your Experience section can include a wide range of experiences. This section is not limited to only paid positions; thus you can include relevant volunteer and internship opportunities as well. In addition, sometimes job searchers use qualifiers to highlight different types of experience, and even divide their experience into categories that are relevant to the job. Some examples of categories might include:

- Managerial Experience
- Research Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Non-profit Experience
- Writing Experience

The way you explain your experience on a resume is very important. Use bullet points and action verbs to describe the work you have conducted. You can visit our website for a list of action verbs to use. When you begin your bullet points with action verbs, you are essentially highlighting a key skill that you used at that job. Avoid starting your bullet points with “Responsible for,” which doesn’t tell the reader the specific skills you applied. Also beware of weaker action verbs, such as “Worked,” “Used,” “Assisted,” and “Participated in.” These verbs are vague and can usually be replaced with something stronger and more specific. Include at least one bullet point per experience, but do not go beyond six points. Otherwise it becomes difficult for a reader to quickly understand what you are trying to communicate.

When writing your bullet points, be sure to go beyond a description of your work and the action you took. Think about your work in terms of accomplishments. After each bullet point you write, ask yourself what the result was of that action. What was the outcome? Quantify the result when you can. For example:

- Awarded fellowship
- Researched and wrote grant proposals, receiving \$50,000 in funding for individual research

(The first bullet point above lacks detail and begins with a more passive verb. It is challenging to discern what skills led to receiving the award. The second bullet reconstructs this experience to highlight the skills this person employed and includes the result, which is quantified.)

Sometimes you may not be able to quantify a result with dollar signs, percentages, or numbers, but you may be able to provide an anecdotal result. For instance:

- Used social media to market event
- Marketed annual department event through social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, resulting in increased attendance

(Note that the first bullet point does not provide much detail and starts with a weaker verb “used.” The second bullet point leads with a stronger action verb, which immediately gives the reader a sense of the skill applied in this experience. There is also a result, even though it is not quantified.)

Think carefully about the requirements of the job(s) to which you are applying. Give detailed examples of when you’ve done similar work. For example, if there is an emphasis in the job posting on using certain software or on project management skills, make sure you have a bullet point (or two) on your resume highlighting these relevant experiences and abilities.

Additional Categories

There are additional categories that job candidates sometimes include on their resume, depending on the job search strategy, field, and type of roles to which they are applying.

Career Summary or Profile

The “Career Summary,” “Profile,” or “Professional Highlights” is placed immediately after your name and contact information. It is essentially a summary of your most important skills, experiences, and knowledge that match the requirements of a specific job listing. It is a way to highlight for employers exactly how your background fits with the position. A summary is often most useful for those who are changing careers and those who have experience in several different fields and need a way to connect the dots for employers.

A summary typically includes only 3 to 5 bullet points or resume phrases. The first bullet point is typically similar to a branding statement describing who you are as a professional. The following bullet points might start with:

- Experience in...
- Strengths include...
- Recognized for...
- Adept at...

These points focus on specific skills, experiences, abilities, talents, and knowledge that relate most to the job and what the employer is seeking. Pay particular attention to the “Preferred” or “Required Qualifications” section in the job posting for clues to what the employer thinks is important.

Skills

Often job seekers include a “Skills” section. This could include a range of skills, including language skills. If you are in a field that requires knowledge and use of numerous technical skills, you will include a separate section that highlights software, hardware, programming languages, operating systems, applications, statistical techniques, lab equipment, and whatever else that might apply. Depending on the importance of these skills to the position, this section may be listed before your experience.

Project Experience

In some cases, if a candidate has completed educational-related project experience that are relevant to the targeted job and does not have much work experience, it may be beneficial to include a “Projects” section. Each project is treated like a job and therefore is listed with the school or other organization where the project is affiliated, the name of the project, and bullet points describing the skills employed, tasks undertaken, and results of the project.

Volunteer Experience

If your volunteer work is related to the work you are pursuing, it may be beneficial to include this experience in your experience section. As mentioned above, employers are not always concerned about whether you were paid or unpaid but rather about the type of skills and experience you gained. If your volunteer experience is unrelated, you may still want to include selected opportunities if the work covers skills that are not mentioned in previous sections on your resume.

Interests

Sometimes people include information about their interests at the end of their resume. This is useful if your interest is unique and sustained: "Textile artist with a focus on hand-dyeing materials with plant-based dyes," or "Named top 20 Scrabble player in the U.S." Enjoying "travel" or "reading" is not unique.

Considerations for Ph.D. Students and Alumni

If you are a Ph.D. student or alumnus/a with an academic CV, it is likely that you will have to make substantial cuts in the content of your CV to get it to 1-2 pages. Sometimes it is hard to know what to eliminate. If you are applying for a particular job, let the job announcement be your guide. Stress the points of connection between your background and what the employer is seeking. You may find that some of the things you've spent a lot of time on (your publications, for example) do not need to be listed on a resume or can be summarized in one bullet point ("Published 5 healthcare-related articles in competitive, peer-reviewed journals"). In other instances you may want to include a "Selected Publications and Presentations" section, especially if some of the content relates to the work you are pursuing. Remember that your resume is just a marketing tool, and as such only focuses on aspects that make you most attractive for a particular position. Extraneous information distracts employers and causes them to doubt that you truly understand the nature and requirements of the position.

Remove from Your Resume

Acceptable resume styles evolve over time; some popular trends of the past are now passé. In addition, countries outside of the United States have varying application guidelines. You can remove the following from your resume:

- An objective statement "Seeking position in the non-profit industry"
- Multiple repetitions of the same action verbs in your bullet points
- Bullet points leading with "Responsible for"
- Full sentences and first person "I" statements on your resume
- The statement "References available upon request" or listing references at the end of your resume
- Personal information, such as age, date of birth, marital status, and a photo
- A keyword section where you list multiple keywords for your field

Research Statement

The research statement (sometimes called "research summary" or "statement of future research") is another common component of faculty job applications. In about one to three pages, the statement should describe your current work, highlight your accomplishments (your "contribution to knowledge"), and discuss the direction you expect your research to take in the future. Through the research statement, you want the search committee to both understand and appreciate your particular academic interests and expertise, dedication to research, fit with the department and school, and potential as a scholar.

You may want to start with a brief paragraph outlining the major components and themes in your research. Then you can go on to describe your dissertation research and additional research projects or your next project.

For your dissertation research, think about these questions:

- What questions are you asking? What is new about your research? How is your approach innovative or distinctive?
- How do your findings or conclusions represent a contribution to knowledge?
- What methodologies or theoretical perspectives do you favor for addressing these questions?
- What do the results show?
- What has resulted from your research in terms of publications, presentations, etc.?
- In addition to your dissertation, what other research projects are you working on? How does it all connect?

For your future research projects, consider these questions:

- What are your future research plans and goals? What direction will you take next?
- How will your future research be beneficial to the institution to which you are applying? For example, will you be able to bring in grant money? Will you collaborate with other faculty? Will you develop new courses? How will you involve the students there?
- How will your research relate to your teaching?
- What resources do you need to pursue your research, particularly at the schools to which you are applying?
- What are your publication plans?

Try to situate your work in the context of your field, so that people from across your field can understand the impact of your work. This is particularly true when you are applying to smaller schools and community colleges where there may be only 1-2 sociologists in a Department of Social Sciences and Human Services, for example.

Teaching Statement and Portfolio

Many institutions will ask you to send them a teaching statement, sometimes called a “statement of teaching philosophy.” They may also ask you to send “evidence of teaching excellence.” You may be asked to send these materials as part of your initial application, or an institution may request these as your application moves forward.

We hope you’ve started thinking about your teaching philosophy and building a portfolio of teaching materials well before you go on the job market. The GC Teaching & Learning Center (cuny.is/teaching) is a terrific resource for doing this. Staff there can also review your teaching-related job market materials. In addition, below are a few tips for preparing these materials and deciding what to submit.

Teaching Statements

Teaching statements are personal and reflect what you have learned about effective teaching both as an instructor and a learner. There is no fixed structure to a Teaching Statement but it should demonstrate both your thinking about and your commitment to teaching by providing an overview of your principles and values as they are put into action in the classroom. Be sure to illustrate how you intend to achieve your teaching goals, and discuss specific strategies and techniques you’ve found successful. These statements should be concise and avoid grandiose or abstract language; they are typically just one or two pages.

Your statement should address what you do (and aspire to do) in the classroom. After reading your philosophy, the committee wants to understand what it would be like to attend one of your courses. They are also considering:

- Will you be able to handle the teaching requirements of the position?
- Does your teaching style and philosophy fit with the department and students?
- What will you be adding to the department?
- How will students benefit from your classes?
- What have you learned works in a classroom from your own teaching experience?
- How does your research impact your teaching?

You will want to include one or two concrete examples of your work. For example, if you talk about assigning a project, describe the details and perhaps highlight a particular example of one student. Consider the following questions to help you reflect on your teaching philosophy:

- How do you engage students in the subject matter?
- How do you see your role and interact with students?
- How do you organize your class time?
- How do you address challenges teaching in your discipline?
- How do you work with students with various levels of prior knowledge and different learning styles?
- What methods, strategies, pedagogies, and technologies do you use?
- What knowledge, skills, and perspectives do you hope students take away from your course?
- How do you measure your effectiveness and obtain feedback from your students?

Though your teaching statement does not necessarily need to be tailored to each institution, you may find that there are different examples you want to include or different courses you'd like to highlight as you apply to different types of institutions. Review the website of the institution to which you are applying to glean points on their teaching philosophy that can be used to inform your statement.

Evidence of Teaching Excellence

What is "evidence of teaching excellence?" Often, the most effective way to provide this to search committees is to be sure that one of your recommenders has seen you teach and can address this in his or her letter. This direct testimony can provide some of the strongest evidence for your teaching skills.

In addition to your teaching statement, syllabi from courses you've taught, sample student activities, and student evaluations can also be used to demonstrate teaching excellence. These materials make up what is called your "teaching portfolio." These are materials that you probably will not send to a search committee unless specifically asked. Keep in mind that search committees already have a lot to read. If, however, a search committee asks for "evidence of teaching excellence" without specifying what they would like to see, you might pick one or two items from this category and send them along with the rest of your dossier.

Letters of Recommendation

For your academic job search (or to apply for fellowships), you will need at least three letters of recommendation. These should be written by people who know your research and teaching well enough to address these in detail in their letters. In many fields, job candidates apply to a large number of open positions. When this is the case, their faculty members usually write them one recommendation letter that is applicable to a range of institutions. Occasionally, students do ask a faculty member to write them a letter for a specific opportunity. You will want your letters of recommendation to be confidential, which means that you will not read them. Confidential letters of recommendation are more credible to potential employers.

Make life easy for yourself and your recommenders by doing a few things:

- Ask for your letter *well in advance* of your application deadline(s).
- Be sure to give your recommender a deadline that predates the institution's or organization's deadline (e.g. if all of your materials need to be in by October 15, ask your recommender to complete the letter by October 1).
- Send your recommenders the most current version of your CV and cover letter. In addition, you can ask them if they would like to see any other job search documents you may have prepared, such as a research statement or dissertation abstract. They might even want the job description of the position to which you are applying. All these materials will help them write a more tailored letter. Use this opportunity to update the recommender (if necessary) on the status of your research, plans for future research, your teaching and so on. This will enable them to personalize your recommendation, making it much stronger.
- Give your recommender an idea about why you are asking them and what you would like them to highlight. If there's something specific (your teaching, a research project) that you would like a recommender to mention, ask.
- Gently remind your recommenders that your deadline is approaching if you haven't heard from them (or don't see their letter in Interfolio).
- Be sure to thank your recommenders after the documents have been submitted.

Dossier Service

The Graduate Center has partnered with a company named Interfolio to provide confidential online dossier services. The student works directly with Interfolio to establish a portfolio that can include letters of recommendation, curriculum vitae, writing samples, dissertation abstracts, teaching certifications, student evaluations, and more. The Interfolio system accepts and stores almost any type of information. Interfolio is an excellent way to store and deliver materials to an academic search committee or for further study. Interfolio maintains robust technological safeguards to keep documents private and safe. Once you sign up and upload your documents, the process for sending out materials becomes as simple as telling Interfolio where you want to apply and when. Interfolio allows for the sending out of general letters of recommendation as well as ones that are specific to a given opportunity. See the services tab of the [Career Planning website](#) for more information.

INTERVIEWS

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

A job interview represents an opportunity for an employer to evaluate you, your skills, your experience, your personality, and whether you would be a good fit for the organization. It is also your primary opportunity to evaluate a potential employer: Is this position a good next step for you? Do the staff or faculty members seem like people you would like to have as colleagues? What do you think about the organization's culture? Do you like the management style and personality of your potential supervisor? Your goal in an interview is to articulate to a potential employer why you are the best person for the job. What combination of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes make you the person they should choose?

Some of the general interview advice given here also applies to interviews for faculty positions, particularly the advice about interview preparation. Nonetheless, those preparing for faculty interviews should be sure to read the next section on interviewing for faculty positions.

Preparing for an Interview

Once the hiring manager and his/her team have chosen a few candidates to interview, perhaps two to five depending on the situation, the interviewees will be contacted via email or phone to schedule an interview. The interview process can vary greatly from organization to organization. For example, it might entail two rounds of interviews, with a first round consisting of a 20 minute interview via phone or Skype with just the hiring manager or a representative from human resources and then an in-person 60 minute interview with a few team or department members for the second round. Sometimes there is only one in-person interview, or there can even be multiple in-person interviews. For some positions, you may be asked to conduct a presentation, share a portfolio or samples of work, or complete an assignment, such as analyzing a set of data. You will most likely learn about all of these interview details when you are scheduling the first meeting with the employer. If you are not sure of the remainder of the interview process, this is an appropriate question to raise during your initial interview. In addition, you should inquire about their timeline for making a final decision. This will give you a sense as to when you might hear from the employer.

Start your interview preparation by conducting research on the company or organization and the industry with which you will be interviewing. How does the position in which you are interested fit in the organization? Has the employer been in the news lately? Take the time to find out all you can about the employer. Doing so will help you develop ideas for how you can contribute to the employer's mission and goals. You can gather this information by conducting an online search, visiting the employer's LinkedIn company pages, and/or consulting a website featuring information on companies, such as Glassdoor.com.

Next, you will want to review your key strengths, skills, and experiences. Start by reading over the cover letter and resume that you submitted for the position, and think about how you would highlight elements from these documents during an interview.

It can help to prepare three or four points about your strengths, skills, and experiences that you absolutely want to communicate to the employer. These represent your key message to an employer; you will constantly come back to this message when responding to questions during your interview. Note that these key points may change from interview to interview, depending on the exact job. Perhaps these key points will be the same elements you highlighted in your cover letter. Spend some time revisiting the job posting and your company research to decide which points will be best to highlight during the interview.

Key Points for Interview:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Next, keeping your key points in mind, devise three to five examples from your past education, work experience, volunteer opportunities, and internships that illustrate these points. These examples might be projects, accomplishments, or successes that you are proud of. For instance, let's say one of the key points that you want to get across to the employer during the interview is being able to communicate to a diverse audience. Thus, one of your accomplishments that highlights this point could be that you taught a very difficult subject, that you initially knew little about, but were still able to create a comprehensive course that received positive evaluations from the students.

After you have recorded your achievements below, think about what other skills these experiences demonstrate (in addition to the key point). From the example above, being able to succeed with a difficult project and unfamiliar material shows perseverance, tenacity, resourcefulness, and a host of skills including teaching, public speaking, research, communication, interpersonal, and organizational skills. Having these achievements and stories in mind will be important when you are asked various types of interview questions. Employers love examples!

Accomplishments <i>(should incorporate at least one of the key points you want to make)</i>	Demonstrated Skills

Interview Logistics

If your interview will be in person, be sure you know where you are going and arrange your schedule and transportation for that day so that you can arrive on time. Also determine who you are going to be meeting and conduct research on these individuals. Bring extra copies of your resume. Dress professionally and, if possible, arrive early to the interview to give yourself time to settle, collect yourself and review your notes.

If your interview will take place via phone or Skype, be sure you will have a quiet place to speak, and make sure all of your technology is working. You might even test it out beforehand. With a Skype interview, pay attention to your background, which employers will be able to view, as well as your lighting in the room. Don't forget to dress professionally. Remember to look into the webcam when you are speaking to simulate direct eye contact.

For a phone interview, you may have notes in front of you, but avoid shuffling papers and reading responses. Use a landline if possible to avoid connection problems and dropped calls.

Preparing for an interview should involve practicing aloud—talking about yourself, your previous experience, and where you see yourself in the future. This is particularly true if you don't have much interviewing experience. You can practice with friends, family members, and roommates. You can even record your answers via your phone and play them back. Don't forget that you can also schedule an appointment with our office to practice with a career adviser.

What to Expect

Most interviews will begin with introductions. If you are meeting in person, shake hands and smile. These may sound like obvious points. It is important, however, to shake hands firmly, to look your interviewer(s) in the eye, and to project confidence. Make a good first impression. Try your best to remember the names of your interviewer(s); doing so can make a good impression throughout the process. Ask for their business cards as well so that you have their contact information for sending thank-you emails.

Most interviews will begin with a question that is something along the lines of "Tell us about yourself." This is not a time to give your listeners a full autobiography ("Well, I was born in Akron, Ohio"). Rather, it is your chance to make a focused statement about the things that make you the best candidate for this job. This is a good time to use those three-four key points you prepared about your candidacy before the interview.

There are different types of questions that may be asked during an interview:

Traditional Questions

These are general interview questions about yourself and your background. Some examples include:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in this specific position and organization?
- Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses.
- What are your career goals for the next five to ten years?

To answer traditional questions, prepare and practice responses that are brief (no longer than 60 seconds) and positive; incorporate elements of your key points; and express enthusiasm. It's easy to find useful lists of typical interview questions online, at sites such as Glassdoor.com or Vault.com. After practicing several of these, you will find similar themes among the questions, which are all trying to get at specific types of information: your background and experience, attitudes about work, strengths and challenges, interest level for the position and company, and your career goals.

Behavioral Questions

These include the dreaded “Tell me about a time when...” questions. A few examples of such questions are:

- Describe a time when you worked on a team and things didn’t go as planned. What did you do?
- Tell me about an accomplishment that you are really proud of. How did you achieve this accomplishment?
- Talk about a time when you took on a leadership role. What was the situation and how did it unfold?

This is a good opportunity to refer back to the accomplishments you recorded above; would any of these be a good fit for behavioral questions? Often we experience both successes and challenges during the process of completing any project or task, so you can most likely rephrase each scenario in one way or the other as necessary, depending on the question asked. When you do respond to these questions, you’ll want to vary the examples that you use, which is why it is helpful to have several distinct situations in mind.

A good way to approach answering behavioral methods is with the STAR method, in which you describe first the **S**ituation, and then, sequentially, the **T**ask, the **A**ction, and the **R**esult. This will enable you to provide your listener with a short narrative describing the situation and what you learned from it.

Here is a brief example:

Situation: I had an opportunity to teach a course, even though I was not very familiar with the subject matter.

Task: I needed to take charge of the course and teach it without any support from more experienced faculty. I needed to create all the materials and structure for the course.

Action: I immediately conducted thorough research on the course subject matter, consulted with individuals in the field, and reviewed sample syllabi online. I then created the structure, materials, and specifics for the class. Each week I reviewed the upcoming course content and revised as necessary.

Result: Each class meeting went smoothly, and students were highly involved in discussion and projects. I received positive responses from students on the course evaluation and from faculty observers.

Field-specific and Technical Questions

Some industries will ask questions specific to your field, and if applicable, may ask technical questions about technical or other skills such as programming related to your field. Some examples might include:

- How do you calm an irate customer?
- If you were to introduce a new product into a foreign market, what are some of the factors you would first study in that country?
- What teaching methods do you find work best with a diverse classroom?
- How much reuse do you get out of the code you develop and how?

Oddball Questions

You might be asked questions that seem nonsensical, such as “If you could be any color, what color would you be and why?” In these cases, often the interviewer wants to see how you react to an unknown, unusual or uncomfortable situation. You cannot really prepare for these types of questions, but remember to stay calm and pause for a minute to think of an answer. Consider the job at hand and what characteristics would be beneficial to portray through your answer. Don’t be afraid to be a little creative with these types of questions (particularly if you are interviewing for a position in a creative field). Remember as well that for many of these questions there is no ‘right’ answer, just a thoughtful one! Here are some examples:

- Tell me a joke.
- Why is the tennis ball fuzzy?
- If you were going to be stranded on an island, what three items would you take with you?

Case Interview, Brainteasers, and Market Sizing Questions

In these types of interview questions, you will be asked to analyze a business-related case or market situation. The interviewer will present a scenario as well as some data points. Then you will be expected to ask further questions, strategize an answer, and finally walk the interviewer through your logic. In this case, it is less about arriving at the right answer than about showing how you came up with your answer. Strategy consulting firms are well known for asking these types of questions, as are investment banks. In fact, the Boston Consulting Group and McKinsey & Company have samples on their websites. Here are some examples of these types of questions:

- What is the market for pizza slices in New York City?
- How many golf balls will fit in a 747 airplane?
- Your client is a ski resort. Global warming has made it such that natural snowfall has been reduced by 50%. The client is concerned. What should they do and why? (from caseinterview.com, an actual McKinsey case)

Your Questions

As the job candidate, it is important to plan to ask the interviewer a few questions as well. Often the interviewer will ask if you have any questions toward the end of the interview, although the opportunity to pose questions may come up throughout your conversation. Prepare at least three questions you might raise, and make sure they are questions that are not easily answered by reviewing the employer's website and job description. Asking thoughtful questions shows your interest in the position and company and that you did your research. Avoid any questions relating to salary and benefits; it is best to save these types of inquiries for when you are officially offered the position.

Some examples of appropriate questions you might ask during the interview phase include:

- What are some of the goals and challenges this department will likely face this year?
- How would you describe your management style?
- What are the most important characteristics you are looking for in a candidate for this position?
- What is the timeframe for your interview process?

Follow Up and Negotiation

After the interview ends, send a thoughtful thank you note or email within 24 hours (email is generally the acceptable route these days). You can include the standard "nice to meet you" message but also briefly reiterate the main points of your interview. You might refer to the 3-4 key points you highlighted during your interview and re-emphasize why you are the best candidate for the position. Perhaps there was something specific that you and the employer discussed, whether professional or personal, to which you might refer. If you forgot to mention something important during the interview, you can include it in your note.

If you interviewed with several people, such as in a group interview or had multiple individual interviews, you can send a separate thank-you message to each person (which is why it is helpful to collect business cards from each individual at the interview). Try to vary the message text from person to person.

Most employers will let you know the timeframe in which they hope to make a decision. They may tell you that they will contact all candidates by a specific date. If that date comes and goes without any notification, you may send a follow-up email to your main contact at the organization to reiterate your interest and check in. If you still do not hear back, wait a week and then send a second email. At that point it is best to make no further contact and wait for the employer to respond. Many times, employers get sidetracked with searches or have to wait for internal approvals and underestimate how long it will actually take to make a decision. Try to be patient. For the most part, employers will contact those they interviewed to let them know if they are the final candidate or not. It sometimes takes a while.

If you don't get the job

Although you may not hear from the companies to which you submit a job application, if you are interviewed, it is common for employers to notify you of next steps or that they moved on with another candidate. However, the amount of time it may take to make a decision can vary greatly. There are many factors that can impact the length of a search and the interview process. The final candidate might need to be reviewed by HR to ensure that the hiring manager adhered to the company's policies during the interview and hiring process. The hiring manager's boss may have put a hold on the search due to budget issues. An important team member is on vacation for some time. And the list goes on.

If the employer finally reaches out and shares that you are not the final candidate, be gracious and thank them for the opportunity. You may ask at this point if they have any feedback for you on your interview. Often employers will give you a very general response, such as, "The other candidate was a better fit," but sometimes they will be more candid.

Keep in mind that if you were asked for an interview, the employer was impressed with your resume, cover letter, experience, and skills. Don't take this rejection personally. If you got along well with the interviewers, treat the interview process as a networking experience. You might even keep in touch or connect with the employer on LinkedIn. There have been situations in which the first-choice candidate declines the offer or things don't work out. The employer may then reach out to you to gauge your interest.

Negotiation

If you are offered the job, congratulations! Thank the employer and express your excitement about the opportunity. At this point you may ask directly about the salary and benefits if you do not yet have this information. Then request 24 hours (or more if you need it) to review the complete package.

During your 24 hours (or however long you have), carefully consider the entire offer: career opportunity, chances for advancement, professional development opportunities, potential new connections, start date, and of course salary and other benefits. If you have not already conducted research on salary ranges for your field and position, do this now via websites such as salary.com, payscale.com, and glassdoor.com.

Next, choose two aspects of the job opportunity and offer that are most important to you and that you would like to discuss further. For example, you may decide that you would like more money than initially offered and a flexible schedule, such as working one day from home per week.

Reach out to your contact at the end of the 24-hour review period, and request to speak by phone or in person to discuss the offer further. When you speak with him/her, reiterate once again your excitement about the opportunity and offer. Then bring up what you would like to discuss. This may be phrased something like:

***You:** Thank you again for this exciting opportunity! I have reviewed your generous salary and benefits package, and I would like to discuss two points regarding the offer.*

***Employer:** Sure, what would you like to discuss?*

***You:** First, I really appreciate the salary offer. However, based on my research and my X, Y, Z skills that I bring to this position, I was expecting to make something more along the lines of _____. [Pause and wait for employer's response]*

***Employer:** [Gives a yes or no or gives a counter-offer. Note that the employer may need to speak with someone else for approval and get back to you]. You said there was something else you would like to discuss?*

***You:** Yes. The other point I would like to ask about is working one day from home each week. During this time, I would focus on X, Y, and Z work, which I find I can most efficiently complete in my home office. I had this arrangement at my previous job, and it worked out very well.*

Before the negotiation, you will want to think through how you will respond to the employer saying yes, no, or giving a counter-offer. What is acceptable to you? At what point will you turn down the offer? Keep in mind that if you have made it to this juncture, the employer is usually enthusiastic about bringing you on board and wants to please you. Thus, s/he is going to try to find some way to work with your requests. However, sometimes the employer's hands are tied, and they truly do not have much room for negotiation. Always attempt to negotiate, especially with salary. It is almost always the case that the employer has offered you a lower salary than they can, because they expect you to negotiate. As the saying goes, don't leave money on the table. Ask for what you are worth.

Once you have come to an agreement, thank the employer and request a written offer including your start date, salary, and any other terms you agreed upon. Review the written offer carefully, and if there are any sections or legal terminology that you do not understand, be sure to have this clarified before you sign anything. Once the document is signed, you have an official agreement.

INTERVIEWS FOR FACULTY POSITIONS

In the academic job interview process, most universities and colleges will have a search committee that directs the review of applications and interviews for a particular faculty position. The committee will review all applications and select a group of candidates to move to the next phase.

In an academic job interview, the goal of those faculty who are interviewing you is to assess your fit for the department in terms of research, teaching, service, and what some might call “collegiality.” Departments want to find someone who is not only a strong researcher and teacher, but someone who will be a good colleague and who is a good match for the department, its mission, and its students.

In many fields, the academic job interview process takes place in two rounds. The first round is a short, thirty-minute to one-hour interview that takes place sometimes by phone, sometimes at a professional conference, or, increasingly, via Skype or similar services. The second round is usually a full day or two-day visit to a campus.

Preparing for Your interview

For any type of academic interview—whether by phone or Skype, or in person at a conference or on-campus—you will want to have prepared as best as possible.

- Conduct research into the curriculum, department, institution, and faculty so that you understand the institution and department’s culture, priorities, needs, strengths, and gaps. Look into publications of the department’s faculty members and learn about the research areas the department is emphasizing. Ask your adviser and others if they know the program. Know your own strengths and what you offer this department. How do you stand out? What makes you the best fit for this position? What gaps in the curriculum could you fill? What courses can you teach right away?
- Prepare to answer common interview questions. Get comfortable talking about your research and dissertation, teaching experience, future research plans, and interest in the particular institution to which you are applying. In addition, be prepared to talk about your work with those who are in your area of specialization as well as administrators outside of the department.
- Prepare questions to ask faculty, students, and other administrators. Make sure these questions build on the research you have conducted on the institution and department. In other words, the questions you ask should not be easily answered by an internet search.
- Practice interviewing—either with faculty from your department or with a career adviser (or both)—so that you can talk about these things fluidly and with confidence.

Different Types of Interviews

Telephone/Skype Interviews

- When you schedule the interview, find out who will be on call; in addition to getting the contact information for the interview, get a name, email, and number of someone you can reach in case something should go awry.
- Choose a setting where you will not be interrupted by others and there will not be any background noise.
- For phone conversations, you can have materials in front of you. However, be careful not to shuffle papers during the call or read directly from the documents.
- For a Skype interview, dress professionally and make sure the background of your setting is not distracting (e.g., messy room). Check your lighting and screen appearance, if possible. Practice the interview on Skype ahead of time.

Conference Interviews

- These interviews are typically brief, lasting 20 minutes to 1 hour. Therefore, you must get across your qualifications concisely but at the same time be memorable.
- Bring extra copies of your CV, course syllabi, teaching evaluations, and other documents, just in case you need them.
- When you schedule the interview, find out whether you will be interviewed by one faculty member or a group and who they will be.
- If you have the good fortune of having multiple conference interviews, do not overschedule yourself and allow time between interviews so that you can take a break and get to where you need to go.

Campus Interviews

- These interviews are usually one to three days long. As with other interviews, if possible, get the schedule, logistics, the names of those with whom you will be meeting, and so on ahead of the interviews so that you can thoroughly prepare.
- If you will be presenting or teaching a class, be sure to get the specifics for each situation. Who will be present? How long do you have? What audiovisual and computer equipment will be available to you?
- You will most likely have a packed schedule, including meetings with faculty, deans, and students. You may go on a tour of facilities, teach a class, have lunch and dinner with faculty and administrators, and attend other social events.
- Be ready to talk about your research to anyone and everyone. Develop a cocktail party version of your research and brief personal introduction.
- Your job talk will be one of the most important aspects of the campus interview, as it will be your chance to share your research and demonstrate your teaching style. Be sure to present in a way that will appeal to a wide audience who may not be familiar with your area. Practice your talk with your adviser and other graduate students.
- Know that at some teaching-focused institutions a teaching demonstration may take the place of a research-based job talk.
- Engage energetically with each new person you meet. It will be the first time that person has heard about you and your research, even though you have been talking about it all day.
- Have extra copies of your CV and other materials that you submitted to the search committee. You might also bring samples of syllabi for courses you designed, abstracts of articles, dissertation abstracts, and so on.
- Be sure to ask about the tenure process, the teaching load, and any other professional matters that are important to you. You will need this information in order to make a decision about the position if it is offered to you.

Sample Interview Questions

Some questions you may be asked include:

- Tell us about your teaching.
- Tell us about your research.
- What contribution does your research make to the field? Why is it important?
- How would you teach our department's introductory courses?
- What is your next project?
- What are your future research plans?

- How do you motivate students?
- How do you feel about teaching required courses?
- In your first semester, you will be responsible for teaching course X. How would you structure it? What materials/texts would you use?
- What would you do to encourage students to major in our field?
- Do you have any plans for seeking external funding for your research?
- Why are you interested in our department/institution?
- Can you summarize the contribution you would make to our department?
- How would you teach our students (who may be different from CUNY students)?

In addition to being asked questions, it is expected that you will have some questions for those interviewing you. These questions should reflect that you've done some research on the institution and the department. You can't ask: "How many students go here?" Your questions must be more substantial than that (and not easily answered by an internet search).

Here are a few good questions:

- What do you like best about teaching at this institution?
- What are the department's goals for the next five years?
- How does this university support your research?
- What are the service expectations for junior faculty?

Follow Up and Negotiation

After each in-person interview, you will want to send a thank-you email to the person who chaired or hosted your visit or conversation. You do not need to send a note to each person you meet; sending one to your main contact is acceptable. In your note, express your sincere appreciation as well as interest in and enthusiasm for the school and department. You might also reiterate your strengths and how you can contribute to the school.

If you are offered a position, news of this offer may come by email or it may come by phone. Most institutions will first inform you of the salary and other terms of the position, and follow this up with a formal letter of offer. Please do not feel that you must accept a position the moment it is offered to you. Thank the person who has made the offer, express enthusiasm for the position, and ask for time to decide. Then, you will think carefully about the offer, and set up another time to negotiate the terms.

Negotiating a faculty job offer is a complex process. You will likely want to ask for a higher salary and the institution may or may not be able to accommodate this request. You might also negotiate the following depending on the type of institution that has made you the offer: a research and travel budget; start date; teaching load and schedule; funds moving expenses; employment opportunities for a partner; service load. These are just a few examples. It can be good to conduct your follow-up conversation over the phone. Afterwards, you can send an email to confirm newly negotiated terms. It is difficult to give more than general guidelines for negotiating a faculty offer, as each job candidate and each institution are unique. Talk to your adviser and committee about what you might ask for, or make an appointment to come to our office.

CONCLUSION

We hope this guide was a helpful starting point in thinking about your career options and job search steps. All the sections in this guide—self-assessment, job searches, networking, applications, and interviews—are topics you can address in more depth through our Office of Career Planning and Professional Development. Our office offers numerous additional services and resources, such as:

- **Career advisers**, who meet one-on-one to answer questions, discuss self-assessment and career planning, review application materials, and more
- **Writing services**, including graduate student consultants who provide one-on-one peer feedback for writing questions and documents
- **Events**, where you can hear from and network with professionals and alumni across a multitude of fields
- **Digital resources**, including past webinars, informative blog posts and articles, alumni interview podcasts, and more
- **Workshops**, where you can get hands-on tips and feedback regarding your career materials and questions

To learn more about the services and resources available to you, visit our website (cuny.is/careerplan) or our office:

Office of Career Planning and Professional Development
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016
Room 3300.09
P: 212-817-7425
 @CareerPlanGC